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[THE SECRET INTERVIEW BETWEEN ALEXINA AND LYLE INDOOR.]

ALEXINA.

CHAPTER XI.

Thou sayest I am a wretch—
And thou sayest true—these weeds do witness it—
These wave-worn weeds—these bare and bruised limbs.
What wouldst thou more? I shrink not from the
question.

I am a wretch, and proud of wretchedness;
'Tis the sole earthly thing that cleaves to me.

Maurin's Bertram.

As Lord Ashcroft looked upon the prostrate form of the under-forester grovelling in utter misery and wretchedness upon the bare, cold earth a feeling of commiseration for him sprang up within his breast. He had, on first discovering him, involuntarily put his hand upon a weapon in his bosom, but surely he would have no need of defending himself against that crouching being, from whom all strength and activity seemed suddenly riven.

Quitting the path, his lordship sought the side of the unhappy young man, his approach being unheard, and said, in a not unkindly tone:

"Come, come! This cold wet ground is no place for you, Kepp. Get up. I wish to talk with you."

At the sound of his voice the under-forester lifted his head and regarded his lordship vacantly, showing a face so pale, worn and full of misery that Lord Ashcroft pitied him, even while believing him guilty of attempting an awful crime.

"Get up," repeated his lordship, seeing that Kepp, while hearing, had not comprehended his former words. "Can't you take me somewhere where I can have a long talk with you—some sheltered place?"

Kepp muttered assent, without evincing the slightest surprise at the request, arose languidly, and shook himself unconsciously as a dog might have done, and then turned on his heel, striding into the deeper shades of the forest.

Lord Ashcroft followed him in silence.

A few minutes' walk brought them to a pretty little pagoda, which nestled in a tiny dell, looking like a fairy's palace. It had been erected as a shelter for

wanderers in the forest during a storm, and besides being exquisitely ornamental was extremely useful, it having a tight roof and flooring.

It was furnished with a bench and two or three chairs, and its one small window was half-covered with a silk curtain.

Into this retreat Kepp conducted his lordship, who seated himself upon the bench and motioned the forester to a chair.

But the young man flung himself upon the dry clean floor, and silently and without curiosity awaited Lord Ashcroft's communication.

As he lifted his inflamed and tear-swollen countenance his lordship could detect no wickedness in it. It had no weak lines, no indecision, nothing sinister, but expressed exactly what he had always been reputed to possess—an active, honest, resolute character.

But the worst men, with the most tiger-like hearts, have often possessed mild and pleasant faces.

In looking through a gallery of portraits of the greatest criminals in the world, the secret poisoners and the assassins, one is astonished to find what honest-looking, well-seeming countenances they had, and what a degree of personal beauty many of them possessed.

As the most flower-wreathed jungle often conceals the fiercest beast of prey, so often the fairest face hides a heart of fearful blackness and the most unbridled passions.

Such thoughts as these passed through Lord Ashcroft's mind as he looked upon the countenance of the under-forester, and wondered that it had expressed neither fear nor surprise at beholding him.

"Your mother says you are going to leave Egremont, Kepp," he said, abruptly, keeping a keen gaze upon the young fellow's face.

"Your lordship has seen her then?" returned the under-forester, almost insensibly. "I might have known that she could keep it no secret."

"Why should she?"

"I don't know, my lord, except that I don't care to have everybody know of my going. But it makes no difference," he added, in a crushed, heart-broken way.

"Where do you think of going?"

"I can't tell, my lord—to sea, I think."

Lord Ashcroft reflected a moment, and then said: "Perhaps I may assist you to go, Kepp. Be perfectly frank with me, and tell me why you are my enemy!"

"Your lordship's enemy?"

"Yes, Kepp. Tell me frankly why you hate me."

"But I don't hate you, my lord. 'Tain't for the likes of me to be hating a nobleman like you!"

"Why are you intending to leave Egremont?" inquired Lord Ashcroft, determined to change his course, and approach the subject more carefully.

"Because, my lord," and the poor fellow's face blushed again, and the tears sprang into his eyes, "Donald Kay has determined that I shan't have Jessy, and my good name, that I've always prized so, is gone, and the servants up at the great house turn their faces away from me and pretend not to see me, and my lord looks upon me as a murderer—oh, dear! oh, dear! I wish I were dead!"

"But is not this state of affairs your own fault?"

"How my own fault, my lord? I could not help my father running away from his family!"

"True, but you can avoid doing wrong yourself. Your mother spoke of your wish for more money. Did you never think that a small sum earned honestly is better than a fortune wrongfully gained?"

"I've heard that o' Sundays, all my life long, my lord!"

"It is not the hearing a good precept, but the practising it, that makes us better!" observed his lordship, gravely. "But I have not come here to lecture you, Kepp, nor have I come to upbraid you. If you wish to leave your native country, and will promise me to endeavour to lead an honest, upright life henceforth, I will aid your escape from justice."

"Escape from justice, my lord?" cried Kepp, opening his eyes.

"Do not feign ignorance of what I mean," and Lord Ashcroft's tone was stern, and his fine eyes had an expression in them before which the bewildered under-forester quailed. "Why you have sought my life I know not, but some gentlemen would not for-



give the treacherous assault of last night. To come upon a man whom you suppose to be sleeping, and cowardly attempt to stab him to the heart—

Kepp uttered so fierce a cry that his accuser paused.

"Who says I did that?" he cried, hoarsely. "No one saw me—"

"I saw you, wretched man."

"No, my lord, you did not see me! No one saw me—for I was not there! Does your lordship think that because I am poor and humble that any crime may be laid to my charge? It seems," added Kepp, wildly and despairingly, "that every man's hand is against me. Yet I have done nothing that I should be so treated—nothing, nothing."

His voice sank into a wail, and he sobbed like a child.

Despite his convictions of the man's guilt, Lord Ashcroft felt sorry for him.

"It is useless for you to deny the charge I have made," he said. "Can you show me where you spent last night? Can you find some person who will vouch for your whereabouts between the hours of one and three?"

"I cannot, for I was alone in the forest!"

"In the forest throughout that wild storm and without a purpose?"

"I couldn't bear to be indoors, my lord. I couldn't breathe in there. And the storm in the forest was not half so bad as the storm here," and the forester struck his breast with his clenched hand.

"Can you not understand your position? The man whom I pursued in the forest had a form like yours, and dropped a gun which proved to belong to you."

"But, my lord, I lost that gun—"

"So you said, but you could not tell the name of the borrower. The same man came to me last night and tried to stab me. I frightened him away, but he left behind him a knife which is also yours!"

Kepp looked astonished, frightened—but not guilty.

"My knife!" he said. "The one I use in the forest? I deny it."

For answer Lord Ashcroft drew forth the knife that had been left in his bed.

At sight of it the under-forester appeared amazed, and said, in a low tone:

"It is not my knife, my lord."

"But it belongs to your mother!" interposed Lord Ashcroft, with increasing sternness. "She has already told me that it is her own, and that you lost it a month since, and that you have professed yourself unable to find it since. See what a dreadful array of evidence has accumulated against you!"

"My mother has murdered me!" groaned the unhappy young man, sinking back upon the floor. "They may hang me if they will. I shall not raise my voice against it!"

"Is there anything you could say?" asked his lordship, patiently.

"Yes, yes. The man that borrowed my gun made the attempt upon your life. He found my knife when I lost it in the forest. But I can hardly believe it of him. I thought him so good—well, well, it's the way of the world!" and the forester laughed discordantly.

"But if you can name the person who borrowed your gun you ought to do so. Think of your poor mother whose old age would be embittered by your transportation to a penal colony. Think of poor Jessy who loves you so, and you will grieve over your shame and disgrace. Think of your good name, and the neighbours by whom you have always been respected and honoured as superior to them."

"I do think of them all, my lord," groaned Kepp. "Oh, if I only knew what to do! Perhaps, after all," he added, brightening, "I can clear my own name without injuring his! He may be able to account for the way in which the gun left his possession. Why didn't I think of it before?"

He sat up and looked at Lord Ashcroft with a sudden eager hopefulness, and his lordship encouraged him in his suddenly conceived idea.

"Prove that these charges against you are false, Kepp," he said, his convictions of the forester's guilt growing weaker, "and I promise to clear away all obstacles to your marriage with Jessy, if money or persuasions be needed."

"Thank you, thank you, my lord," returned the forester. "The case looks dark against me, yet I am innocent. Doubtless he is innocent too, for there is not a man upon the estates who stands higher with my lord than he. Yes, I will take your lordship to him!"

Lord Ashcroft directed him to lead on, and Kepp arose and conducted him from the pagoda and back by the path by which they had come to the centre of the forest.

"Why, we are at the cottage of Donald Kay!" said his lordship.

"It was here I wished to bring you," responded

Kepp. "Will your lordship come into the cottage?"

Lord Ashcroft assented, and followed him up to the piazza and into the sitting-room.

Kepp breathed a sigh of relief as he saw that Jessy was not there, and that Donald Kay was at home and alone.

The head-forester sat before the large fire, smoking a pipe, and watching abstractedly the blue smoke as it curled upward. There was a forbidding expression on his face, and it was on account of this perhaps that Jessy had fled his presence.

He looked up at the entrance of Kepp and his lordship, and seeing only the former, deliberately arose from his chair, laid down his pipe, and pointed to the door.

"I can't have you in my house, Gosman Kepp," he said, harshly. "I ain't harbouring suspected murderers, and Jessy ain't receivin' on 'em, nuther—Oh! my lord!"

The change in the tone and expression of countenance of the head-forester, as he at that moment recognized the presence of Lord Ashcroft, was almost ludicrous, and still more was his surprise at seeing his lordship in company with his suspected assailant.

"You well know that I'm no murderer, Donald Kay," retorted the under-forester, hotly. "I am suspected of this crime all along of the real party dropping that gun, and I wouldn't let out the truth for fear of getting you into trouble. But praps, as I've thought within a few minutes only, you fired off the gun at the carriage by accident like, and not a purpose, and in that case his lordship'll forgive you!"

"What are you drivin' at, Gosman?"

"This is what I'm drivin' at. I lent you the gun, and wouldn't blow on you 'tother day, for fear of getting you into trouble, and breaking poor Jessy's heart. I might a known you wouldn't a gone and shot his lordship a purpose. All I want of you, Kay, is to own, like a man, that you borrowed the gun o' me, and clear me o' that first assault!"

The head-forester turned pale, then red, and looked confusedly down at the fire, as if afraid of meeting the steady, angry gaze of his daughter's suitor, and the mild, penetrating glance of Lord Ashcroft, and then he forced a laugh.

"I borrowed your gun!" he exclaimed. "That's a likely story. You ain't going to impose on nobody with such a tale as that, Gosman Kepp. Thirty year and more have I been head-forester, and folks have got to hear the first ill thing o' me yet."

"Do you mean to deny that you borrowed my gun?" demanded Kepp, frightened and angry.

"I do!"

The eyes of the two men met, and then Donald Kay's dropped to the very floor.

"Merciful heaven! have I heard him aright?" cried the under-forester, catching hold of the wooden mantelpiece. "Think of what you're saying, Kay," and his voice grew shrill with anguish. "You are sending an innocent man to penal servitude for life. Can't you remember? I was standing by the blasted oak, you know, and you asked me to lend you the gun an hour or two, and I told you to be careful for 'twas loaded. Oh, don't you remember?"

"I can't say I do!" said Kay, still looking down.

"Am I dreaming?" exclaimed Kepp, staring wildly about him.

"You must be, I think," returned the head-forester, avoiding his subordinate's gaze. "I am sorry you've come to this, Gosman, but you needn't go far to lay your fault on me. I've treated you these many years as though you had been my own son, and it cuts me up dreadful to see you turn out this way!"

"Then you think me guilty?"

"I do. I've heard all about both assaults on Lord Ashcroft from the servants at the mansion, and things do look dark against you, Gosman—there's no use denying it. You've disgraced your friends and yourself, and if you are let go out of pity my Jess can have naught more to say to you, and no more can you darken my door."

"We ain't talking of Jessy now," said the under-forester. "We are talking of a matter that concerns a man's life and freedom! We are talking of a mother's happiness, and—Oh, Donald, Donald, don't you remember about the gun? You are joking with me, ain't you?"

Kepp's tone was pitiful in the extreme, and his anxiety was intense as he listened breathlessly for a response.

Kay shook his head.

"You've brought trouble enough already upon my poor mother," began Kepp, recalling his parent's confidence of the morning.

"I—I brought trouble upon her!" stammered the elder man, trembling like a leaf in the wind, as if some terrible memory had been evoked by those simple words. "Who says I ever injured your father?"

He paused, noticing the surprise of Gosman at his words, and checking himself abruptly, threw aside his agitation instantly.

The two men then glowered at each other.

Lord Ashcroft had witnessed the scene with unconcealed astonishment, and he now looked from one to the other of the two men.

Both faces were earnest and full of meaning.

The head-forester's face was more dark and forbidding than usual, and that unpleasantly mysterious atmosphere from the past seemed more than ever to surround him, but he did not seem the man to have committed an awful crime, or to have attempted to commit one.

Gosman Kepp, fiery and indignant, frightened and angry, seemed no more capable of assassination than his opponent, and, but for the discovery of the knife, Lord Ashcroft would have deemed him the more innocent of the two.

Neither looked guilty, yet the secret lay between them.

So thinking, Lord Ashcroft awaited the next turn of affairs.

For a few moments the two men silently stared at each other, and then the elder drooped his head upon his hands and the younger covered his eyes and wept.

At this juncture the door of an inner room opened, and pretty Jessy Kay entered the kitchen.

There were marks of tears on her face, and her red lips quivered painfully, for but lately she had parted with her lover, as she supposed, for ever.

"You here, Gosman?" she cried, joyfully, glancing from her lover to Lord Ashcroft, and then to her father. "Has it been found out that you are innocent? I knew it would be all the while. I told you so."

She stopped, panic-stricken by her lover's motionlessness, her father's attitude, and his lordship's pitying regards, and sat down, as if suddenly faint and weak.

"Go to your room, lass," said her father, without lifting his head. "This is no place for you."

"Go, Jessy," said poor Gosman, as she showed no sign of obeying her parent. "You might hear things as you shouldn't if you stay—things about others than me."

"I shall stay," she answered, resolutely, with all the womanliness of her nature aroused. "You shall not send me from you in your trouble, just as if I were a child. I am your promised wife, Gosman, and my place is with you. If they send you to jail they shall send me too."

As she made this declaration the poor girl flashed a defiant glance at Lord Ashcroft, as if she suspected him of conspiring against her lover, and then she went to Gosman's side, took one of his hands in her own and carried it to her lips.

"Don't be foolish, lass," said her father, harshly, raising his head at last. "Gosman can be nothin' to you. Would you forsake your father for him?"

Jessy had been trained to the strictest obedience, as Scottish youth are usually trained, and her parent expected that his question would instantly reduce her to the utmost subjection, but to his surprise she answered:

"Gosman needs me more than you do, father. I cannot wed with him with your consent, but I shall cling to him and believe in him while I live."

The under-forester was cheered in his misery by this assurance, and clasped the girl's hand as if by clinging to it he could escape the perils surrounding him.

"You refuse then to acknowledge the truth, Donald Kay?" he asked, loth to relinquish the subject.

"Of course I do—now and for ever. There's no use in saying another word upon the matter."

Gosman turned from the contemplation of the head-forester, breathing, and then addressed Lord Ashcroft.

"Let 'em take me, my lord," he said. "They can try me and hang me, if they will—but I am an innocent man."

"Go away from Egremont, Gosman dear, dear Gosman," cried Jessy, tearfully. "Do go. You can escape to some place. His lordship won't prevent your going, and some time you can come back. I will be a daughter to your mother—oh, go!"

"No, I will not flee like a guilty wretch," returned Kepp. "I should be unhappy anywhere with this charge hanging over me, and my going away would make everybody think me guilty. I will not go."

"Not for my sake and your mother's?"

"No, not even for your sake, Jessy. The truth may come out if I remain—yet, no, I hope it won't," he added, distractedly. "I could not bear that the man whom I have always regarded as a father should be convicted of so awful a crime."

Kay cowered before the glance that accompanied this remark, and ordered Jessy to leave the room. The mandate was so harshly given that the girl

dared not disobey, and, sobbing bitterly, she caught her hood and shawl from the peg on which they hung, and rushed out of doors.

The scene at the *chalet* was not prolonged.

Gosman Kepp made a last fervent appeal to the head-forester to confess the truth in regard to the borrowing of the gun, and it was answered as before by a firm denial, which was half refuted by Kay's shifting, uneasy glances.

And at last the under-forester left the dwelling.

Lord Ashcroft lingered a moment to question Donald Kay, but no light was thrown upon the mystery, and he followed poor Kepp.

At a little distance from the cottage he came upon the young lovers clasped in each other's arms, and sobbing bitterly together.

Woman-like, poor Jessy was whispering comforting words, and her lover leaned upon her, endeavouring to derive hope from her assurances, and reiterating his declaration to remain at Egremont.

Lord Ashcroft longed to say something to comfort him, but he knew not what.

Whenever doubts of the under-forester's guilt arose in his mind they were immediately succeeded by the remembrance of the discovery of the knife and its ownership, and the mystery in regard to the gun.

"Kepp," he said, unwilling to go away in silence, "I think you are doing right to remain here, if you are really innocent. The case looks black against you, I must say, but the truth must eventually prevail."

The under-forester thanked his lordship fervently, and assured him that he would risk his life for him rather than deprive him of existence, and Lord Ashcroft then wended his way back to the mansion, taking care to throw away the knife in the darkest portion of the forest.

As he emerged from the plantation in the midst of which he had encountered that first assault he met Lord Egremont, who inquired the reason of his long absence.

"I was afraid, my dear Lord Ashcroft," he said, "that you had come to harm at the hands of that desperate young ruffian, Kepp. Your sister is fearfully alarmed about you, and Lady Egremont is almost in hysterics, while poor Xina does nothing but look anxious. Did you see the young second?"

"I saw Kepp, Lord Egremont," answered our hero, "and I want to talk with you about him. Help me to some conclusion, and then grant me a favour."

He linked his arm in that of Lord Egremont, and entered upon a narration of the events of the morning, keeping back Mrs. Kepp's admission in regard to the ownership of the knife, and carefully preparing the way so that at the most favourable moment he might make his request.

CHAPTER XII.

Let me call thee mine,
Albeit thou art not: 'tis a word I cannot
Part with, though I must from thee.

Byron.

Ours too the glance none saw beside;
The smile none else might understand;
The whisper'd thought of hearts allied,
The pressure of the thrilling hand.

Ibid.

AGAIN the shadows of evening had fallen around the stately mansion of Egremont. There was a dim moonlight illumining the white-crested waves of the restless sea, the patches of light and shade upon the hoary, time-worn walls of the picturesque dwelling, and the wild scenery of the coast.

At an early hour of the evening Lord Ashcroft had taken advantage of the moonlight to steal away from the drawing-room, and, in company with old Duncan Graham, he had taken a brief sail upon the neighbouring waters, in the hope of hearing again that unearthly music, or seeing the form of the Spectre of Egremont.

But no such good fortune occurred to him.

The windows of the haunted floor were all shrouded in gloom, not a ray of the ghostly light appearing, and, disappointed and troubled, he had given the command to return.

"The spectre ain't always to be seen, my lord," said the old sailor as he altered his sail. "It only appears when something strange is going to happen. It hadn't been seen for months till last night, and the last time it appeared, months ago, was the night Jimmy Bailey's boat foundered, and poor Jimmy came ashore more dead than alive. The visits of the ghost always portend something. I don't doubt but last night it appeared to warn your lordship of what afterwards happened."

Lord Ashcroft made no reply, continuing silent until they reached the rock-stairs, and then he bestowed a liberal fee upon the old sailor, and ascended the steps to the mansion.

He experienced a keen disappointment at not hav-

ing beheld the spectral appearance that had so fascinated him, and his manner was more than usually quiet and constrained as he re-entered the drawing-room.

Although unsuspicious by nature, it seemed to his lordship that Lord and Lady Egremont regarded him narrowly after his return, and the former carelessly inquired if he had had a pleasant walk. He answered quietly in the affirmative, not wishing to explain that he had been out upon the sea, lest the explanation might lead to remarks upon the spectre, and what he now chose to guard carefully as a secret be made a subject for criticism and gossip.

Some time after this conversation, while Alexina was at the piano and Lady Egremont momentarily absent from the apartment, Lord Ashcroft observed his host quietly leave the room, and soon after saw him stealing over the rocks, by the nearest way, to the cabin of old Duncan the sailor.

Why had he gone there?

He soon returned with a countenance in which anxiety and satisfaction were strangely mingled, and devoted himself to his guests during the remainder of the evening, endeavouring to render himself as agreeable as possible.

But the evening had at length drawn to a close, the guests had retired, the family separated, the lights extinguished, and silence and the dim moonlight fell upon the mansion.

And then the private door at the side of the dwelling nearest the sea noiselessly opened, and a woman stepped out upon the porch and looked anxiously up and down the cliff.

She was the Lady Alexina.

Her velvet evening-dress was caught up upon her arm, and her form was shrouded and her face concealed by a long full scarlet cashmere cloak and hood, of the style known as "Red Riding Hood." The garment was thickly wadded and lined with white silk, which was rendered conspicuous as she stood there, the cloak being evidently thrown open purposely to reveal it.

If intended as a signal it was the only one she used.

She stood quietly in the shadow of the porch a moment, as if listening for a sound from within; then, satisfied that her egress had not been heard or witnessed, she glided over the rocks, taking advantage of a friendly cloud obscuring the brightness of the moon.

She did not pause at her favourite retreat, the niche in the rocks, for the night was too cold and wintry to make it a desirable resting-place, but walked on, turning into the garden walk as the cloud passed from the moon.

The tall evergreens bordering the walk screened her effectually from the observation of anyone who might chance to be looking from one of the windows of the mansion, and warding off the cold, piercing wind that came in from the sea.

But, as they nearly met in a pointed arch at some distance overhead, the walk was not particularly pleasant to the heiress, who shrank from its gloom, murmuring:

"What if I should meet the spectre here?"

The thought caused her to quicken her steps, and she sped along the path half fancying that she heard pursuing footsteps, and that the next moment a spectral hand would press heavily upon her shoulder.

Repressing the scream that arose to her lips at the thought, she hastened onward.

Her destination was a small, substantial pavilion, built in the airy style possible for a building intended to be used equally in summer or winter, and to serve as a shelter from sudden storms as well as a retreat from summer heats. It stood upon a small point of land at some distance from the house, and was entirely shut out of view from the latter by the thickly intervening trees. Upon one side of it lay the handsome garden, upon the other, and many feet below, the sea.

Making her way to this pavilion, the heiress opened the door and entered its one simple apartment.

The room was very dark, except where faintly illumined by the light straying in through the now open door, but Alexina could distinguish nothing within, and her heart beat loudly as she whispered:

"Lyle, are you here?"

"Yes, I am here," responded the voice of Lyle Indor, and he arose from a seat in a distant corner upon which he had been reclining, and approached the Lady Alexina.

His first act was to close the door, his second to bring out from behind the seat a dark lantern, and his third to turn on the light and deposit the lantern upon a small shelf that projected from the wall.

"Don't light it, Lyle," said the heiress, nervously. "What if someone should be wandering about the garden—one of the servants, perhaps—and see the light?"

"Don't be alarmed, Xina," was the response. "The light cannot penetrate beyond the room. Look at the windows!"

The Lady Alexina obeyed and observed that the inside shutters of the windows, which were numerous, had been closely drawn.

Reassured she seated herself in a large chair near the door and said, shivering:

"The night is fearfully cold, Lyle. I am almost sorry I promised to meet you here. Should the meeting be discovered I dread to think what my guardian or Lord Ashcroft would say. I am sure that Lord Ashcroft is the most particular man in the world, and I would not for anything offend him."

"Of course not, Xina. And I would not have you offend him," rejoined Indor, seating himself at a respectful distance. "But, should he come upon us at this moment, I do not see that he could object to our interview. There were things I wished to say to you that could not be said before the family, and we should have been liable to interruption had we met in the picture-gallery or library. The only way to meet in secret was to meet here."

The Lady Alexina shivered again and tapped her foot restlessly upon the floor.

"You are cold?" cried Lyle, springing up and bringing her a warm Scotch shawl he had brought with him. "You see what it is to have a thoughtful friend like me, Xina."

He folded it about her, securing it by a clasp in front, and then resumed his seat.

"What was it you wished to say to me, Lyle?" she asked.

"I have so much to say that I scarcely know where to commence. The communication I am about to make to you will doubtless surprise you, and you may condemn me for making it. Yet I can keep silence no longer."

"You need not hesitate to speak freely to me, Lyle!" said the Lady Alexina as he paused for encouragement to proceed.

Lyle Indor hesitated, his effeminate face now presenting a look of greater manliness, but soon said:

"Perhaps the part I am acting is treacherous to Lord Ashcroft, but I am constrained to think that the happiness of the greater number should be considered first—"

"I don't understand you."

"I will come to the point. You know that you are beautiful, Alexina, and it is not necessary for me to rave of your dark eyes and scarlet cheeks, although the task would not be unpleasant, for I think of them continually. It is enough for me to talk of the effect of your beauty upon me. I have spent a year under the same roof with yourself, have shared your few pleasures, your hopes and desires, and, as might have been expected, I have learned to love you. Our tastes are congenial. We both love gaiety and society, and I sometimes think that we were formed for each other."

The heiress smiled with gratification.

"You do not check me, Alexina. You are not displeased with my presumption?"

The Lady Alexina murmured a gentle negative.

"You will hear me through patiently, then? A thousand thanks, Xina," and a thrill of joy rang through Lyle Indor's soft tones. "I have never said a word to you of love because I have always known of your betrothal to Lord Ashcroft. I would not be dishonourable. But now that he has come to Egremont, and you have shown no warmth of manner in your treatment of him, I am emboldened to plead in my own behalf."

Receiving a gracious smile, Indor continued:

"I will not plead in the usual lover's phrase for your smiles and your love, Alexina. I do justice to your good impulses, but I am not ignorant of your faults. You are selfish and tyrannical, but if I become a part of yourself your tyranny will not be hard to bear. Can you smile upon a lover who reminds you of your faults, Xina?"

The novelty of the manner of his wooing pleased the heiress, and she asked:

"Am I to understand, Lyle, that you love me?"

"You are! Can you love me in return?"

"I can—I do, Lyle. I have loved you ever since you came to Egremont. Your coldness has at times offended me, but I have never ceased to love you!"

Lyle Indor's eyes sparkled, and he made a movement towards her, but instantly checked it, sinking back in his chair.

"This assurance gives me unbounded pleasure, Xina," he said. "I prize your love beyond anything else this world can afford. I wish that I might speak to you of marriage, but alas! you are promised to Lord Ashcroft, who will marry you from a sense of duty, and I must walk on through life alone. I cannot ask you to dismiss him and give yourself to me, for by so doing you will lose all the wealth you now adorn. I fear too that should you see some other lady enjoy the fortune of which you would be

dispossessed you would regret your rejection of Lord Ashcroft and acceptance of me!"

"Oh, no, I cannot give up Egremont!" declared the heiress. "Tired as I am of being shut up here, I would not exchange the place for any in the realm. I want to see society, but not at the expense of Egremont, the home of my ancestors; Egremont, with its farms, its lands, its rent-rolls—oh, no, I could not! I have been taught to think of all these things with pride, and I cannot give them up! To-day, when we walked through the picture-gallery, you can scarcely imagine what a thrill of pride I experienced in thinking that that long row of portraits represented the faces of my ancestors. Is it not a grand thing to be the owner of all these possessions, to be admired and honoured as the Lady of Egremont?"

"I can understand your feeling, Xina."

"I love you, as I said, Lyle, and I would sacrifice almost anything except Egremont to become your wife. But I cannot resign what so gratifies my pride—no, not even for your love. Oh, why did my father make such a cruel will? Why did not my mother protest against it? Was there no one to plead in behalf of the little child whose future they were so lightly bartering away?"

The heiress spoke passionately, and a fiery glow burned on either cheek, and a stormy look brooded in her dark eyes.

Lyle Indor saw the struggle she was undergoing—the struggle between love and pride—and he chose to end it.

"Dear Xina," he said, in those soft, feminine tones she loved so well, "I could never accept such a sacrifice at your hands. No, we must part. You will wed Lord Ashcroft, and I—I will look on and see you given to another, and then return to my lonely life. If I may not have you to love, no one can prevent me from cherishing your memory. I shall never marry!"

"Oh, why did not that assassin succeed in his design?" cried the heiress, passionately. "If he had but killed Lord Ashcroft—don't look so shocked, Lyle: I think it and I must say it—I would then have married you, and we would then have been happy. I cannot think of it without anger. I feel as though I could almost kill Lord Ashcroft myself!"

"Alexina!" and Lyle Indor shrank from her in horror. "It is terrible enough to think of assassination even at the hands of a man, but to hear a woman's lips—But you were not in earnest!" and his tones became calmer. "Poor troubled child! In your momentary bitterness you would have welcomed anything that would set you free from your galling bond!"

"I would, Lyle, and the feeling is more than momentary. Last night, as I arose from the chair in Lord Ashcroft's sitting-room, and looked up into his face, I could not help feeling sorry that I did not look upon it in death!"

"I think he read your feeling, Xina, as I did," answered Indor.

"Then perhaps he will resign my hand and go home?"

"No, for he feels bound in honour to meet his engagement with you. He will not give you up, and it is best not. It would be well if you could gain an interest in him, Xina. You would be the happier for it."

"There is no need to 'affect' an interest in him, Lyle. I feel one now, but not of the sort that would be most agreeable to his lordship," replied the heiress. "I am glad Kepp is still permitted to go free."

"How is he permitted to go free?" asked Indor, abstractedly.

"Why, don't you know, Lyle? Lord Ashcroft went to see Kepp and his mother to-day, and his tender heart was so touched by their distress that he has begged my guardian to wait a little longer, and see what will happen next. Lord Egremont protested against his request, but finally yielded, for new complications have arisen. I only hope that he will take advantage of his respite!"

"Hush, Xina! You do not hope so. It is a terrible thing to be cut off in one's youth, when one's prospects are all bright and a happy marriage is all arranged. An assassination is awful at any time! As much as I regret that Lord Ashcroft is bound to you, and that you are bound to him, I do not wish that any evil should happen to him. On the contrary, I wish him all possible happiness!"

Indor's tone was profoundly melancholy, and caused the tears to spring to the eyes of the heiress. Noticing her emotion, he arose and approached her, took her hand and respectfully raised it to his lips, and said:

"Perhaps I have done wrong, Xina, in talking as I have done to the betrothed bride of another, but I fancied that you loved me, and that the confession of my passion for you might prove a consolation in some dark hour!"

"It will—it will!" sobbed Alexina, arising and

leaning upon the arm he offered her. "I shall think of it often, Lyle. Perhaps something may happen yet to free me, and if there should, remember then that I am bound to you. I would rather marry you than anyone else in the world!"

"I will remember it," he answered, despondingly. "Yet what good will the remembrance do me? And, Xina, I would not for worlds that harm should come to Lord Ashcroft, not even to bring about my joy!"

He held out his arms, received her in them, pressed a long tender kiss upon her forehead, received a caress in return, and then put her from him, saying:

"Henceforth, Xina, you must be to me as the bride of another!"

"Unless something happens, Lyle," she said, eagerly.

"Unless something happens," he returned, with sad emphasis. "And now, Xina, I will extinguish the light and conduct you to the house. I fear you may get cold if we remain here longer."

He opened the door, and the heiress went out upon the step while he extinguished the light, put away the lantern, and he then rejoined her.

She took his arm silently, and they passed slowly into the walk that led to the residence.

The conduct of Lyle Indor had touched her to the heart. She had long loved him, not knowing that her affection was returned, but receiving his attentions only as the respectful treatment he would have accorded a dear sister. The knowledge that he loved her now filled her heart with a delicious joy, and she longed with all the strength of her passionate heart to cast off the fetters binding her to Lord Ashcroft, and become the wife of Lady Egremont's nephew.

For one wild moment, when the avowal yet trembled upon Indor's lips, she had been tempted to declare that she would forfeit everything if she might but be always with him, but the caution and love of luxury that were a part of her nature gave her power to resist the temptation.

No; she could not give up everything even for Lyle Indor.

As they proceeded up the gloomy walk they talked freely of the love of which the expression must henceforth be forbidden them, and when they reached the porch the heiress whispered:

"Remember what I told you, Lyle. If anything should happen to Lord Ashcroft I am bound to you. If Kepp should kill him I will surely become your wife!"

Without waiting for the reproach which this remark would call from Indor's lips she ran into the house, and silently sped along the halls to her own apartments.

He secured the door, removed his shoes, and followed more leisurely, fearful of being overheard by some sleepless inmate of the dwelling.

As he passed along the wide upper hall, at the end of which opened the rooms of Lord Ashcroft, the Lady Loran, and others, besides passages leading to other parts of the residence, he saw flitting at a little distance before him the spectre of the Lady Jasmine!

He recognised it in a moment, and its innocent eyes rested upon him, thrilling him with an uncomfortable feeling that was almost fear.

She glided on, her feet making not the faintest noise upon the polished floor, and suddenly seemed to fade from his sight, vanishing at the entrance of a passage as completely as if the earth had opened and swallowed her up.

Looking into the passage, almost at the same moment, he saw nothing of her, and he hastened on to his room, breathing more freely when he had placed his door, with its secure bolts, between himself and the spectral visitant of Egremont.

(To be continued.)

WANTED A CHILD.—A paragraph that has recently gone the round of the papers, and which appeared originally in a Staffordshire paper, stating that a child, well dressed, and with a bank note or cheque for 200*l.* wrapped up in its clothing, had been found in the ladies' first-class waiting-room at the railway-station, at Stafford, turns out to be nothing more than a stupid hoax. The master of the Stafford Workhouse (Mr. Wyatt), the station-master, and others, have received upwards of a hundred letters from all parts of the kingdom, and from persons of almost every grade in life, applying for the privilege of adopting the interesting little stranger, their philanthropy no doubt being stimulated by the hope of obtaining the 200*l.* Some of the letters are of a very extraordinary and amusing character, as will be seen from the following extracts. One lady applicant, writing from Derbyshire, says that, in addition to the healthiness of the locality, the child "would have the advantage of having new milk every day," and that if some day it should be claimed

the child would be found "all that a fond parent's heart could desire." Another candidate offers the master of the workhouse 10*l.* for his good offices in procuring for the writer the guardianship of the child, with an additional 10*l.* for the guardians. A third party, having just lost an "orphan," who died suddenly, would like to take it under their fostering care for the consideration of 200*l.* A gentleman from London, referring to the 200*l.* note, says he lost one on the same day, and asks for the number. "A lady residing at Hastings," who has no child, writes to know the age and sex of the little one, and whether fair or dark. All the candidates offer the most undeniable references. As in many instances stamped addressed envelopes have been enclosed, the master of the workhouse has taken the trouble in those instances of informing the parties that they are the victims of a hoax.

LIVING IN THE SHADOWS.

Some sorrows kill with sudden stroke,
Like a thunder-peal from a summer sky;
Leaving the heart, ere the storm pass by,
Like the lightning-smitten, shattered oak.

AND so it had been with me. But yet amid all the trials, sorrows, and clouds that have flitted over my young life I have always kept with my woman's heart a wee bit of sunshine. I am living in the shadows of a long, dark night, which overhangs my life journey like the black wings of "Giant Despair." Yet, still, the sunshine will peep forth. Sometimes it struggles through the moans, sighs, and heartaches which find a resting-place within my bosom, in so faint a ray that no one but my own self can see the least glimmer of its glorious beauties. I said these rays, so broken and faint, shed glorious beauties. They do, but I often wonder how it can be.

And often fancy they are entirely in the dark, with not even the echo of one dancing, sunny ray to check the faint hearts of those who live in sadness and in tears.

It seems so strange to me now, when my own head is full to bursting, when its load of sorrow seems crushing me to the earth with its heavy weight, that I can speak words of comfort, cheer the sad-hearted, and nurse the weary invalid.

But I have often done that—aye, wept at the trials of loved ones, when I could not shed one tear to ease my own grief. There are black and grievous wrongs which almost break the slender heart-strings—which seem to put a discord in every song of every-day life. They seem like dark funeral palls hanging o'er the soul, and settling upon the very streams of love and life!

Dark and weary streams may sometimes float in and across the quivering heart-strings! But, oh! so sad, so weary, that the very echo dies away because there is no sunshine to give it light and life. But joy! The shadows will pass away by-and-by. "It is not all of life to live, or all of death to die!" And in the world, however dark it may be behind the sombre cloud, there is a silver lining. We may not see it, we may never behold it in this life; but in the hereafter

We shall live no longer in the shadows,
For by faith I see the day
When all these clouds of sorrow
Shall in beauty break away.
When bright and glorious visions
Shall gleam forth in the light
Of the land, where tears and sadness
Shall never dim the night!

R. S.

If a person standing under the arch of a bridge speaks with his face turned towards one of the piers, the sound is reproduced near the other pier with such distinctness that a conversation can be kept up in a low tone, which is not heard by anyone standing in the intermediate space.

AT SALAMANCA.—Many stories might be told of noble deeds of valour done that day, every tale a true one, of how the gallant soldiers of 1812 fought for Albion, and sent their laurels home. A 48rd man, shot through the thigh, lost his shoes in the marshy ground; refusing to quit the battle-field, he limped on under fire with naked feet and blood streaming from his wound, and thus marched on for several miles over a country covered with a small flinty stone. Kit Wallace, a private in my company, a simple sort of fellow, who had no friends and was always a butt, and often called a coward in joke, said, "I'll not fire a shot, a single shot, in the rear rank" (his proper place), and rushed to the front, expended his sixty rounds of ball-cartridge, and, calling for more, said, "Now, am I a coward?" A man who fought beside Wallace was struck with a ball that passed through his body on the right side; you might have put a ramrod completely through the hole. He deliberately took his last shot, walked to the rear, lay down under a tree, and went to sleep in death.—*Rough Notes by an Old Soldier.*



[MAY'S HISTORY.]

THE
WATER-WOLF.

CHAPTER XV.

BEYOND all question, a serious difference had arisen between the fathers and their children.

The heart of Amy Cranstoun, so long promised by her father to Harold Mayne, had been won by the handsome young baronet, Sir Arthur Aldene, who had been her fellow passenger on the Sea Bird.

The heart of Harold Mayne, on the other hand, had been won by some enchantress unknown to the reader; and the long-cherished project of Sir Charles and the judge was thus in danger of being defeated.

These facts being now fully in evidence, it is time to inquire after the object of Harold's affections, and to discover all the causes of the disagreement which had thus arisen.

On the north side of Smith's Island, midway between its extremities, and fronting towards St. George's, there could have been seen, within ten rods of the gravelly beach, at the period of which we write, a neat and comfortable cottage.

There was something quaint and incongruous in the appearance of this structure, for it had been built chiefly of pieces of wrecks, and thus displayed here a door, there a window, and elsewhere a wall, which had once figured as portions of so many different vessels.

The original dwelling had consisted of a small square building, divided into two apartments, one of them of good size; but a wing had been built upon one side of it at a later period, to serve as a bedroom, and a small shed in the rear had afterwards been added to serve as a kitchen.

The first owner of the cottage had been a maiden lady, who had kept a school in the principal room; a school composed of the children of the neighbouring fishermen and labourers.

This school teacher, a Miss Nelson, had planted the lovely blossoming vines that covered the sides of the building and mounted to the roof, converting the simple cottage into a bower of beauty and fragrance. It was she who, with an innate love of refinement, had caused to be constructed over the front door a pretty latticed porch, and her hands had trained the Virginia-creepers over it until it had become a perfect shelter from sun and rain.

At her death, which had occurred about five years previous to the date of our narration, the little cottage, with its quaint flower-garden, its tiny spot for

vegetables, its simple furniture and other appurtenances, had descended to her adopted daughter, the only being in the world whom she had loved, and whom we will now introduce to the reader.

The wing of the dwelling was more closely covered with clinging vines than the other portions of the cottage. Its windows could scarcely be seen on account of their leafy screen, which served as blinds in the summer.

In this wing, which formed a small, but exquisitely neat apartment, at an early hour of the morning, to which the events of our narrative have advanced, a young girl lay sleeping.

The windows were pushed up for the perfect ventilation of the little chamber during the night, and the perfumed air played with the girl's hair, and fluttered the white window curtains softly.

The room was rather long and narrow, and the foot of the bed rested almost against one of the windows. Opposite the bed, at the other side of the chamber, was a half-circle-shaped toilet table, draped with figured white muslin over pink cambric. This table was furnished with a small dressing-glass and various articles for the toilet. A small mahogany stand in one corner displayed upon its polished top a pretty open work-box, and near at hand was a work-basket, containing an infant's cloak, of white cashmere, in the process of being ornamented with exquisitely executed buds and blossoms in silk embroidery. There were a few engravings on the walls, a neat straw matting on the floor, and a set of hanging shelves, well laden with choice educational works, interspersed with a few volumes of poetry and romance.

There were a neatness and an air of purity about this little room peculiarly appropriate to the private chamber of a young maiden.

Its occupant, the sleeping girl, was, as we have indicated, the adopted daughter of the late school-mistress, and looked well worthy of the care and love with which her early days had been surrounded.

Her sweet oval face had a lovely contour; her pretty red lips were parted sufficiently to display her white and regular teeth; her blue-veined eyelids drooped over her eyes, so that their colour could not be seen, and her wide forehead indicated unusual intellectual power. Her sunny curls strayed over her pillow, and one cheek was nestled in her hand, while the other hand lay like a rose-leaf upon the counterpane.

A smile flitted over her mouth, showing that she was indulging in a pleasant dream.

"Mother!" she whispered, in faint and awe-struck tones. "Oh, mother!"

There was an entranced look on her young face as she uttered that name, but it died away, and a look of supreme content succeeded as she murmured:

"Harold, dear Harold!"

Perhaps the sound of her own voice awakened her, or she might have been excited by her dreams, for she stirred uneasily, and opened her eyes with something of a wondering look.

Her first glance about her room recalled her to the facts of her existence.

"What a strange dream I have had!" she said, aloud, in a musing tone. "What a lovely being visited me in my dreams! I thought I called her mother!"

She raised her head, leaning it against her hand, and, bracing her elbow against her pillow, murmured, with a sudden flash of memory:

"I am seventeen years old to-day! And I believe I am the happiest girl in the world. How many blessings I have!"

She glanced at the objects we have described as ornamenting the room, every article of which was endeared to her as having been the gift of her earliest friend, Miss Nelson, or else as the fruit of her own industry.

And then she sprang out upon the floor and went to the window, her bare white feet peeping in and out from beneath the hem of her night-robe. She put back the muslin curtains, parted the screen of leaves and blossoms, and looked out upon the sea that lay spread out before her in the glare of the morning sunshine like a rare and gigantic gem.

"How beautiful," she said, softly. "What a glorious Sabbath morning! What a lovely birthday!"

She looked upward at the unclouded sky, and her every glance was a prayer, scarcely needing her whispered petitions for the happiness of "Harold," for the continuance of the blessings that had beautified her life, and for the prosperity and well-being of all her friends. She did not forget to ask that the convicts in their hulks, almost within sight from her window, might be blessed and pardoned by a power higher than that which had condemned them, and various other petitions were uttered, all of them evincing the kindness and tenderness of her heart, and her generous sympathies for the erring and the oppressed.

She turned away from the window at last, and proceeded to dress herself for the day, her movements full of dreaminess and a far-away look in her eyes.

She brushed out her waving hair and, last of all, put on a pretty morning dress of white muslin,

thickly sprinkled with tiny peach-blossoms. A lace frill surrounded her white and slender throat, and lace ruffles shaded her delicate wrists.

If she had looked beautiful in her sleep, how much more than beautiful she looked now, with her face illumined with consciousness and intellectual activity!

Her sunny curls rippled over her shoulders in shining waves, her wide forehead seemed to have acquired greater breadth, her red mouth curved into a happy smile, and her whole face was transfigured into a strange loveliness by her eyes—large, lustrous brown eyes, full of a sweet, tranquil light.

She looked at her reflection in the little mirror, with the bright colour fluttering in and out of her clear cheeks, with a smile of innocent admiration at her strange beauty.

"Harold says that I am the most beautiful girl he ever saw!" she whispered, shyly. "And he is sure that his father and mother will love me when they see me. Oh, I hope they will! I do hope that Sir Charles and Lady Mayne will love me, and think me good enough to be Harold's wife!"

She clasped her hand involuntarily, making her aspiration a prayer, and then she moved about the room, arranging the furniture, plucking flowers from the vines screening the windows, and filling a couple of China vases with the floral trophies.

Then she proceeded to the mahogany stand in the corner, and unlocked her work-box, producing from its most secret recess a small and quaintly shaped box, covered with violet velvet.

Seating herself upon a low sewing-chair, she pressed the spring of this box, the lid flew up, and a diamond ring was revealed, nestling in its bed of white satin.

She took the jewel out, and put it upon her finger—the fore-finger—and turned it around again and again, surveying it with enraptured gaze.

It was a beautiful gem, faultless in itself, and faultless in its setting. Cut as a brilliant, it was set in an enamelled ring, and surrounded with enamelled flutings, whose quaint lines of black gave a singular look to the limpid jewel.

It had been a gift from Harold Mayne, and the young girl prized it above all other earthly possessions.

She caused it to sparkle and flash forth a perfect coruscation of radiant hues, and enjoyed its glitter, as if it had been the prattle of a child.

"Oh! isn't it lovely?" she exclaimed, with a long-drawn breath of admiration.

The words yet lingered on her lips when a knock sounded upon her door.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE young girl had only time enough to slip the diamond ring from her finger into her lap, and cover it with her pocket-handkerchief, when the door opened, and a woman stood revealed upon the threshold.

"May I come in, Miss May?" she asked.

"Certainly, Mrs. Brett," responded the maiden, with a sunny smile.

Mrs. Brett advanced into the room and closed the door behind her. She then approached the maiden, her hands hidden under her ample apron, where they evidently supported a burden of good size.

She was a woman of perhaps thirty-five years, with coarse features, which yet wore a kindly expression. Her face was deeply tanned with exposure to the weather, giving her a masculine look, softened by her heavy frame, but her black hair was put smoothly behind her ears, and there were evidences of truly feminine tastes in the red ribbon at her throat and the silver buckle fastening the belt-ribbon confining her robust waist. Her black eyes were without beauty, save that imparted by a kind and motherly expression. Her attire was simple, consisting of a dark print gown, enlivened by a neat linen collar and a black alpaca apron of formidable dimensions.

At the moment of her appearance in the young girl's room her mouth wore a broad smile, and her face was full of pleasant anticipation.

"I didn't know you were up, Miss May," she said. "Somehow you were as still as a mouse, and, thinks I to myself, the pretty dear is over-sleepin' herself on her birthday morning. But here you are all dressed, and as bright as a bird. Many happy returns of the day, child."

With the utterance of her wish she pressed her lips to the girl's white brow—a caress which May received with evident pleasure.

"Sit down, Mrs. Brett," she said. "You are kind to wish me many happy returns of this day, for it's the happiest one I ever knew."

Mrs. Brett took possession of a chair indicated by May, and drew it near to that occupied by the girl, still keeping close hold of her concealed burden.

"Miss May," she began, a look of self-importance becoming visible on her kindly face, "I've been waiting this some time to give you a birthday gift. Somehow, I couldn't think of anything that would just suit you, till the other day, but I think I've hit it at last. You've been like a daughter to me, and I love you as one. You've always been as sweet-tempered and gentle as an angel, and you've taken care of me when I was sick—"

Here her voice momentarily failed, but resolutely dashing a tear from her eye, the good woman continued:

"Tain't no use for me to try to make the speech I set out on. The long and short of it is, Miss May, that I want to give you a present—and here it is."

With a triumphant expression she withdrew her hands from under her apron, and with them an oblong box of polished walnut-wood.

She glanced from it to the surprised maiden.

The scarlet burned vividly on May's cheeks, and then flickered unsteadily, and a look of delight shot up into the clear brown eyes as Mrs. Brett turned the key of the box, lifted the upper lid, and displayed the interior of a very handsome and completely fitted writing-desk.

Lifting an interior lid, the good woman exhibited a varied assortment of writing-materials of the best grades, a supply of white and scarlet wax, a seal with the name of "May" plainly engraved thereon, a pretty pearl paper-knife, a silver-stoppered ink-stand, and a gold pen, fixed into a finely chased silver holder.

It was a pretty little affair, fastidious enough in execution to gratify the most refined taste, and it was no wonder that May was delighted almost beyond expression.

"Oh, Mrs. Brett!" was all she could say as she took her newly acquired treasure upon her lap.

"I knew you would like it!" declared the woman, in a tone of equal delight. "The minute I saw the writing-desk I knew you'd rather have it than anything else, and so I just bought it. You see, I found a couple of poems you wrote, which you happened to leave in the parlour, and that put me into the notion of getting you a desk. You write so much, Miss May, that you ought to have a desk on purpose!"

"But this must have cost a great deal, Mrs. Brett."

"So it did!" responded the good woman, with considerable self-complacency. "But I had the money to pay for it. The money I've got for sewing from Lady Mayne for the last three months has gone into that desk. I had a little something laid up to live on, you know, and the house belonging to you, I've had no rent to pay. I could well afford it, my dear, and it's made me happy to be able to give it to you."

There was no question of her sincerity, and May accepted the gift with thanks, and kissed her friend affectionately.

Mrs. Brett then displaced the work-box upon the stand, and gave a prominent position beside it to the little desk, and resumed her seat.

"I've got something to say to you, Miss May," she said; "something that I want say to-day, and I may as well say it now before breakfast, seeing there is plenty of time. It's about your own history."

May's face grew strangely eager, and she exclaimed:

"I was thinking of it this morning, dear Mrs. Brett. I had a dream just before I awakened—a very singular dream. I fancied a lady was bending over me and calling me her child. She was very beautiful, and seemed little more than a girl in years. I thought I called her mother, and she smiled and kissed me, and bade me be of good courage. And then she vanished."

"It was only a dream," said Mrs. Brett as May's voice expressed disappointment at the conclusion of her dream.

"Only a dream," sighed the maiden. "I know it, Mrs. Brett. I wonder if my own mother looked like dear Aunt Nelson?"

"It's probable not, as she was no relation of hers. The time has come for you to know all about yourself, May. Miss Nelson told me your history and enjoined upon me to tell it to you on your seventeenth birthday. She didn't want you to know it before, lest the knowledge should cloud your life. But, as you were so self-reliant, she insisted upon your knowing it to-day."

"My mother was no relation to my Aunt Nelson," exclaimed May, wonderingly.

"No, dear, though it's no wonder you can hardly believe me when I say it. Miss Nelson brought you up until you were twelve years old, and when she died, five years ago, she left you everything in the world she owned. Miss Nelson was a little withered old maid, but she had one of the largest hearts that ever beat. They say she had been disappointed in her youth, but if disappointment makes people as good I wish more of 'em might be disappointed."

"Aunt Nelson was one of the noblest as well as gentlest of women!" sighed the young girl.

"So she was, Miss May, and she was a good friend to me. When I came to the 'Mudas, a little over five years ago, she was failin' fast with consumption. You remember she had shut up her school, and was doctorin' for her disease, but she had no hope of livin'. I lived close neighbour to her, but I was soon after left alone," here the woman's voice faltered, "and she asked me to come over and be her housekeeper. I was glad to come, and before she died she told me what I am going to tell you. We have stayed on here together since as she wished, and I have kept the house and you have done silk embroidery for a livin', and you have insisted on payin' me besides givin' me the rent, and I have tried to keep my promise I made to her when she was dyin'—that I would take care of you and watch over you and be your true friend."

"You have been, Mrs. Brett," said May, her brown eyes shining through a sudden mist of tears.

"Thank you, Miss May, though keepin' my promise hasn't been hard, for I loved you from the first. But about your history. You were Miss Nelson's adopted niece, and she adopted you when she lived at St. David's. One night there was an unusually wild storm—it was fifteen years ago—and the winds howled and the waves seemed perfectly furious. Such a night had not been known for years. I wish I could describe it as Miss Nelson did. She lived in a little cottage close to the sea, and she couldn't sleep a wink that night on account of the storm. About the middle of the night they heard the booming of a signal-gun, and the fishermen went down to the beach, and she followed 'em. She hadn't been there fifteen minutes—I believe it was that number—when a ship was dashed on the rocks."

"Oh!" said May, involuntarily.

"I ain't good at describin', but it's enough to say that the night was too awful for boats to be sent out to 'em, and so they waited for what might come ashore. Barrels and boxes came, dead bodies came, but not a living one, until something was thrown up by the waves to Miss Nelson's very feet, as she stood apart from the rest. She stooped and found that it was a heavy spar with a little child lashed to it—lashed so securely that it must have been done by a mother's hand. It was carefully wrapped, too, in a water-proof cape, as if even in that moment the drowning mother couldn't bear the darling should be wet. Miss Nelson thought that the child was warm, so she cut the cords that secured it to the spar, and carried it away to her cottage, followed by half a dozen women. They worked over the little body for hours, but when morning came the child was pronounced out of danger."

Mrs. Brett paused to rest and to smile reassuringly into the anxious face of the young maiden, and then continued:

"The child proved to be a girl—a little fairy-like being, with dainty ways and a sweet disposition—and Miss Nelson, who had lived alone, determined to adopt and rear the little waif, who of all that shipful had alone been saved. She named her May, because it was in the last month of spring she had found the child. Soon after she removed from St. David's to Smith's Island, and to this very house which she had built. Here she kept school almost till her death, and you were scarcely ever out of her sight."

"I was the child then given to her by the waves!" exclaimed May, with a pale face. "Did she never learn anything about me—not even my name?"

"Never, my dear. No one ever inquired for such a child. She had an idea that you were of gentle birth, because your hands and feet were so small and pretty, because the few words you could speak you spoke so correctly, and because your clothes were of the finest and richest description. She told me that she felt sure some day you would be claimed by some gentleman's family as a relative!"

A look of hope beamed upon May's countenance as she thought of Harold, and she inwardly prayed that good Miss Nelson's conviction might be a prophecy of the truth, for if she could be proved of good birth she would be so much nearer her lover.

"Oh, if it might be!" she murmured.

"Don't go to wishin' for impossibilities, Miss May," said Mrs. Brett. "Tain't likely you'll ever know anything more about yourself than you do now. Fifteen years have passed since you were wrecked on St. David's, and during all these years no one has ever inquired for you. It's probable that all your relatives perished in that storm, when you were saved. It seems strange that so many grown people should have been drowned when a mere babe was saved; but I suppose it was the will of Providence."

"Was there nothing saved with me by which I could prove my identity should occasion ever arise? Did not Aunt Nelson keep my clothing?"

"No, she didn't think it worth while."

May look disappointed, and good Mrs. Brett hastened to add:

"But there was something saved, Miss May, that'll tell you who you are if need ever comes. It's a queer little trinket that you had on round your neck, and Miss Nelson said it was enough to prove your identity. Your clothes were marked, so they were not worth saving all these years. But here's the trinket."

She took from her pocket a tiny square oaken box, which she unlocked. It was filled with jewellers' cotton, from the hidden depths of which she brought forth a necklace of quaint and singular workmanship.

It was composed of square links of fine gold, each link exquisitely chased and engraved in a separate design. In the centre of each link, surrounded by the engraving, was cut clearly a single word, which formed part of a sentence which began at one end of the necklace and terminated at the other.

May took the ornament in her hands with a strange sensation of awe.

She did not at first remark the engraved words in the centre of each link, and it was some minutes later before she comprehended that the links represented an entire sentence.

"Why, what is this, Mrs. Brett?" she cried, eagerly as she finally detected the fact.

"Read it for yourself, my dear."

May looked it over, and then read aloud the inscription, which was as follows:

"To my niece, G. C., from her Uncle Robert, on her second birthday, June 17th, 1832."

The maiden's voice trembled as she uttered the words that her unknown uncle had caused to be engraved upon the necklace, and she said:

"So my real name is not May Nelson, but its initials are G. C. I can't think what G. can represent unless it's Grace. Oh, Mrs. Brett, I wish I could know who I am, and what my real name is."

"But you can't, you know, dear. I hope you won't make yourself unhappy by brooding over what I have told you."

"Oh, no," responded May, with a sudden flush kindling in her cheeks. "I am not unhappy, and I shall not be. I am naturally a little excited, though, for I had never once thought that I was anything else but Aunt Nelson's orphan niece. No one ever told me."

"Few knew it. The fishermen's wives at St. David's knew she had found a child; but over here it was seldom talked of. She was not a woman to gossip."

"No, she was not," said May, thinking tearfully of the gentle, delicate and refined woman who had cherished her with all the tenderness of a mother, bestowing upon her the love and care that she had never been permitted to give to children of her own. "Poor Aunt Nelson!"

There was a brief silence in the little room, during which Mrs. Brett reviewed her recital, to see if she had omitted any fact worth mentioning, while May thought of her lost parents, her unknown uncle, and her handsome young lover, to whom she longed to impart the story with which she had just been made acquainted.

Mrs. Brett was first to speak.

"Perhaps you'd better wear your necklace occasionally, May," she said; "but I wouldn't put it on often. The neighbours know that you have to embroider for the rich folks, and it wouldn't look well for you to be wearing such a costly trinket every day."

"True, Mrs. Brett. I will keep it where I can look at it often. I shall regard it as too sacred to exhibit to everyone, as it is the only link that binds me to my unknown relatives."

As she spoke May leaned forward, and carefully deposited the necklace in her work-box, which she drew nearer to her. The next instant, to her great dismay, her momentarily forgotten diamond ring escaped from its concealment, and rolled away upon the floor where it finally stopped in full view of the astonished Mrs. Brett.

CHAPTER XVII.

It seemed to the startled May that her diamond had never flashed nor sparkled more brightly than when it rolled away over the matting, seeming to invite the attention of good Mrs. Brett. She murmured something unintelligible to her visitor, and arose to pick it up.

"What is that, Miss May?" asked her protectress as the maiden returned to her seat. "Have you been buying a paste ring, my dear? I thought you detested imitations, but young girls the world over are fond of jewellery, I believe."

"It is not paste, Mrs. Brett."

"It must be a real diamond, then. Let me see it."

May hesitated, but only for a moment. The undisguised anxiety that was expressed in the countenance of her protectress touched her gentle heart, and she silently handed her the ring.

Mrs. Brett took it as silently, and examined it closely, turning it over and over, holding it to the light, and otherwise regarding it. Her face was very grave when she had concluded her examination, and she handed back the jewel, saying:

"Yes, that is a splendid gem, Miss May. It's as clear as a drop of water, and must have cost a mint of money. I don't see how you ever laid up money enough out of your earnings to buy such a thing."

"I did not buy it," responded the young girl, slipping the gem upon her fore-finger and contemplating it with loving admiration. "It was given to me."

Good Mrs. Brett looked seriously distressed at this announcement, and exclaimed:

"Pardon me, Miss May, if I seem to meddle with what is none of my business. But I promised Miss Nelson, on her death-bed, to watch over you, and I love you as if you were my own child. You are very beautiful—much too beautiful for one obliged to make her own way in the world. Confide in me, my dear child, as you would have done in Miss Nelson. Heaven only knows what danger may threaten you. People do not give poor sewing-girls such rings as that without some object. Tell me who gave it you."

The blood leaped in a scarlet tide to May's cheeks, and a shy, sweet light fluttered in her eyes, as she softly answered:

"It was Harold."

"Harold?"

"I mean Mr. Mayne."

"Did the son of Sir Charles Mayne give you this ring, Miss May?"

The girl gently inclined her head in the affirmative.

Mrs. Brett compressed her lips grimly, and exclaimed:

"I always thought that Mr. Mayne was a noble and splendid young gentleman. I never imagined that he could be a villain."

"He is not!" cried May, indignantly. "He is noble, and grand, and good. He gave me the ring because—because—" and the shining head drooped a little in maidenly confusion, and then lifted itself again resolutely—"because he loved me."

"But, my dear, what can his love be to you? The son of a baronet and an Ex-governor would not stoop to wed his mother's sewing-girl."

"Harold would never let family pride come between us."

"But his father would, Miss May. There ain't a kinder-hearted man in the 'Mudas than Sir Charles Mayne. He respects himself too much to have any bad habits, and he worships his wife and idolizes his son. But he is as proud as a gentleman can be of his family. Mr. Harold is his only son, and I truly believe he would rather see him in his grave than wedded to you."

May's face became strangely pale, and she said, in a hushed voice:

"But perhaps I am of good family too, Mrs. Brett."

"If you are, it can never be proved. And a gentleman like Sir Charles Mayne would not take such a thing for granted. Since nothing is known of your real history, he would regard you as simply what you now are—a sewing-girl."

The maiden recognized the force of this argument, and looked at her diamond through magnifying tears.

"And that isn't all, Miss May. Mr. Harold was betrothed by his father to the daughter of his father's best friend years ago, when he was a merchant. This young lady is immensely rich, and she is said to be very beautiful. She arrived at Sir Charles's last night—"

"She is come, then?"

"Yes, my dear. Noxby, the fisherman, told me this very morning, as he passed the cottage on his way to see to his nets, that the young lady came last night, and was sent up to the hall in a carriage along with a gentleman who was with her. The Sea Bird was wrecked, but this Judge Cranstoun and his daughter, and the young gentleman I mentioned, were saved, as were the sailors. This young lady has been brought over here to visit at Mayne Manor, and if she goes back to England at all she will go a bride."

"I know of the betrothal between Harold and Miss Cranstoun," said May. "Harold told me himself. He had never seen the young lady."

"But he knew of the engagement, of course. Did he ever ask you to marry him, my dear?"

The young girl shook her head.

"Then how came you to accept the ring?"

May twisted the tiny circle about her finger, nervously answering:

"He gave me the ring because he loves me, and I accepted it because I love him. He told me that he had been betrothed to Miss Cranstoun but that he should not marry her. He said he did not feel free, though, to ask me to be his wife until he had told her of his affection for me, and obtained a release from the compact his father had made. I am sure I respect him all the more for his delicacy."

"I am afraid he is a double-dealer, Miss May."

"I know he is not," declared the maid, warmly.

"If I could have learned of this affair in another way, my dear," said Mrs. Brett, "I would have mentioned it to Lady Mayne when I took the new batch of sewing home. She's an angel, if there ever was one, and she would talk to Mr. Harold about unsettling your mind to no purpose."

"Harold loves his mother, but not even at her command would he abandon me," said May, with a proud intonation. "But what I have said to you, Mrs. Brett, has been in confidence, and you are not at liberty to repeat it."

"I know it, and I will be as still as the grave. But, Miss May, I wish you would take my advice, and give Mr. Mayne back his ring. Let me take it to him, and tell him that he must not see you again."

The maiden answered quietly, but resolutely, in the negative.

"If you do not reject him, he will soon reject you, my dear. He cannot long resist his father's commands. I am sorry for you, but I am powerless to help you. If I had been of good family, and had powerful connexions, it might make a difference in your fate. But, Miss May, if your life is to be darkened by trials, you must remember that they belong to every lot. I have had more than my share," and the good woman wiped a tear from her eyes.

May looked at her with some surprise and curiosity, Mrs. Brett not being wont to indulge in allusions to her past life. The young girl knew nothing of her beyond the fact that she had been for a brief period Miss Nelson's housekeeper, and was now her own protectress.

"It is right that you should know something more of me, Miss May, and I will tell you something of myself. I am not a widow, as you suppose. I have still a husband. He is a terrible man!" and Mrs. Brett shuddered involuntarily, and a gray pallor crept over her sun-burned face. "If ever a demon existed in human form, it exists in the form of Halsey Brett!"

The young girl received this communication with surprise, and she drew a little nearer the woman with apparent, though unspoken sympathy.

"Where does he live?" she asked, gently.

"I don't know; but somewhere among these islands. I never go to bed at night but with fear that he may claim a shelter here before morning. I never let you go out alone but I fear he may do you some harm, knowing that I love you more than my life. In short, Miss May, my existence is full of anxieties—terrible, corroding anxieties."

"But he would not dare to harm you?"

"You know nothing of such a lawless nature as Halsey Brett's, my child. He dare do anything that suggests itself to his wicked, heartless nature. But I do not want to talk of him. I only want to show you how powerless I am to assist you. Hearken to the words of one who has seen more of life than you have, my dear. Give up this vain dream of Mr. Harold. Give it up now before it has power to wreck your happiness."

"It would wreck my happiness now to give him up," said May, with a quivering lip and a sudden rush of tears.

Mrs. Brett regarded her with a sort of solemn pity, and her voice was tremulous as she responded:

"Let me state the case to you plainly, Miss May. Here you are, a sewing-girl, so poor that you have not money enough laid by to keep you six months in case you choose to be idle. On the other hand is this young gentleman, of a social grade infinitely superior to yours, the hope of his family, the heir of an ancient name. Sir Charles Mayne is not rich. You know that gossip always makes itself busy with the names of prominent people, and I have heard, and believe it to be true, that Mayne Manor is mortgaged, and that Sir Charles is actually cramped at times in his pecuniary matters. They say it's impossible for him to pay off the mortgage, living in the grand style he does, and keeping such a lot of servants. Of course, Mr. Harold knows all these things, and it's probable he's anxious to clear the estate of debt, and make his father's mind easy."

"Of course," assented the maiden, thoughtfully.

"Where'll he ever have a chance like the one he's got now? His father's best friend is rich, and has a pretty daughter, young and accomplished. She will have a splendid dowry, but a very small portion of which would clear off Sir Charles's debts and make him perfectly happy. This young girl is of good family too. Putting all these facts together, you must

see that it is best for Mr. Harold to marry Miss Cranstoun."

May was very pale, and could not trust her voice to reply.

"Miss Cranstoun would be eagerly welcomed into the Mayne family," continued Mrs. Brett, "but they would turn from you as from a leper. They would never, never receive you into their family. Mr. Harold has no money of his own, has he?"

"None," faltered the young girl. "He sold his favourite horse to buy me this ring."

"He would then have to work to support you. He would be cast off by his parents. His father would mourn his only son's disobedience, and his mother would fade away into her grave. What happiness could result from such a marriage?"

"I would never come between Harold and his parents," sobbed May, unable longer to repress her grief.

"Then, the only alternative is to give him up," declared Mrs. Brett, solemnly. "It's hard to say it, dear; but if Mr. Harold marries you he must forsake his parents, his splendid home, and everything he now enjoys. Poor Lady Mayne will perish of grief, and Sir Charles will curse his son."

She paused, looked tenderly at the anguished maiden, and then stole out of the room, while poor May bowed her head upon her hands and gave herself up to the tempest of grief that convulsed her soul.

(To be continued.)

OLIVER DARVEL.

CHAPTER LV.

FOR weeks the divorced wife remained in a state of listless apathy from which nothing seemed to have power to arouse her. Her old aversion to the baron, her dread of him, seemed to have passed away, and she scarcely noticed him as he came and went from her apartments.

She was not permitted to leave the castle, and no visitors were now received. A state prisoner she was to all intents and purposes, but she appeared to be contented with her lot, and never asked to have it changed.

When the weather permitted she walked with her waiting-woman on a broad terrace extending around the southern side of the old building, but she seemed dead to the beauties of nature, as she was to the sufferings of mind. The powerful sedative administered constantly to her produced this effect, but she eagerly required the drops to be given to her, and if not restrained she would often have taken an overdose.

Monthly bulletins of her condition were sent to the cardinal, with which he expressed himself satisfied. At the end of six months he made the stipulated visit, and saw that the physical health of the Electress had improved, though by this time her memory had failed her so much that she scarcely recognized him when he returned to her.

Believing her happier in this condition than if restored to the power of comprehending her wretched position, the cardinal commended the course taken by the baron and returned to Lichtenfels, satisfied that nothing more could be done for the broken-down and forsaken wife.

The ambitious churchman had other and more important things to think of than the fate of a mad woman, however sad her lot, and gradually the Princess Gertrude and her isolated existence almost slipped from his memory.

Had Baron Ardhelm been contented to let well enough alone the Electress might have gone to her grave as harmless as she now seemed; but the restless demon of experiment suggested to him that he might test some new discoveries he had made on the unhappy lady who had fallen so completely in his power.

He would not risk her life, because that would be dangerous to himself; he would only try some reactive agents and judge of their probable effects on others from those they exerted on her. If he restored vital power to her wasted frame—gave mental strength to her prostrate intellect, he could walk the earth clad with almost God-like power.

In his zeal for science the baron set aside the danger he incurred, and comforted himself with the thought that if his patient became troublesome he could easily have recourse to his long-disused powder and again throw a blight upon her awakening faculties, while his skill should neutralize its worst effects upon her physical frame.

The experimentalist considered his former efforts as those of a mere tyro in his art—now he believed

he had acquired such power over the subtle genii of the crucible and retort that he could force them to perform his behest under any imaginable contingency.

With this arrogant assumption of power he commenced his experiments. His first steps were taken with extreme caution, but gradually finding that the same passive state of mind continued, he proceeded with more boldness.

Again the roses bloomed upon the cheeks of the Electress, and light began to sparkle in her eyes; but it was not yet the light of an awakened intellect. She seemed to be slowly returning to the condition which followed that first long illness from which she arose the willing slave of her husband. No memory of the past appeared to stir the oblivious tide that had swept over the sorrows of her life, and she continued to take a childish pleasure in the simplest means adopted to amuse and interest her.

The baron was thus far enchanted with his success. He determined to go farther—he would arouse every faculty save memory, and he believed that his sedulous observation of every phase of her awakening mind would warn him in time to stop short of danger.

Before very long her lips unclosed to warble snatches of song. Drawing-materials and fancy work were called for, and the princess seemed to live in the new light that shone around her, without casting one regretful thought to the past.

She never spoke of her husband or her lost children, but attached herself to the baron with a spaniel-like fondness, which at last moved his heart in her favour. He began to regard her almost as a new existence created by himself, and in his delight at the apparent success of his skill he became oblivious of the danger that might lurk beneath the gentle and submissive exterior of this deeply injured woman.

The Electress was allowed to spend much of her time in the laboratory of the baron, sometimes prattling to him in her childish and artless manner; sometimes trying to assist him in some of his simpler experiments. But the chief object of attraction to her seemed to be the colossal statue which, at his own request, had been removed from Hillhausen and placed in his sanctum. He had thoroughly mastered the secrets of its mechanism, and sometimes amused himself with making improvements in it.

One of the arms had got out of order, and the baron was attempting to restore it to its former condition. By careful examination he had ascertained where all the springs that moved it were concealed; and he knew that by touching certain points upon the shoulders the daggers could be made to remain embedded in the fatal bosom, even when the arms closed upon the form offered to her embrace.

This discovery was peculiarly useful to him, now that he wished to restore the flexibility to the vampire's arms without danger to himself.

Before commencing his work on the statue the baron usually sent his fair companion away on some frivolous pretext; but, with the subtle cunning of those on whom the curse of a blighted mind has fallen, the Electress found means to watch him through a crevice in the door till she made herself mistress of all the secret springs by which the mechanism of the statue was moved.

At first it was with the vague curiosity of a mischievous child that this was done; but as the days passed on, and her mind slowly awoke to memory and to thought, a terrible purpose began slowly to evolve itself from the chaos in which her mental faculties had so long been plunged.

The Electress found means to enter the room unobserved, and try her skill upon the vampire; the daggers moved at her touch—the renovated arms closed on an imaginary victim, and a smile of wild triumph flashed over her lips as they muttered:

"Now I have him in my power—now I can repay him for all he has made me suffer."

But she still continued to play the part she had so successfully maintained for months past.

Yes—the memory of all her wrongs had slowly returned, and in her heart a burning desire was awakened to reach those who had crushed her life and destroyed her children. Vengeance once taken upon them, she could die and be at rest.

Such was the thought of the monomaniac, who was ready to sacrifice her own life to attain the fixed purpose for which she only consented to endure her dreary and monotonous existence.

The skill of the baron had awakened the sleeping demon in her soul, while conscience, fear, and remorse lay torpid and dead. The subtle cunning taught her by the past enabled her successfully to

conceal from him that any improvement had taken place in her mental condition; but Katrina observed the change that had passed over her lady, and she began to dread what it might bring forth. She consulted with her husband as to the necessity of warning the baron; but, to her surprise, Hugel eagerly listened to her account, and gruffly said:

"If it should only prove true that my lady is getting her senses back it may be the making of our fortune. I am tired to death of the stupid life we lead here, and if she will only give me her jewels to assist me to escape I'll help her away, and take her to Vienna, where she can lay the story of her wrongs before the Empress herself. She would see one of her own sex righted, I am sure—but the end would be nothing to us, for I intend to emigrate as soon as I can get away from this country."

This was not the first time that Hugel's discontent had found audible expression, and of late it had been fully shared by his wife. They had no children to occupy them, and after the excitements of Lichtenfels they both felt the dreary monotony of Berchtholz as almost insupportable, and were ready to escape from it with the first opportunity.

Katrina sighed, and said:

"I shall be willing to go anywhere to find a change. My lady's jewels are very valuable, and the good cardinal insisted that they should be given to her. For a long time she refused to look at them, but of late I have several times found her examining them so carefully that I am sure she was calculating their value, with a view to offering them to us to assist her to get away from Berchtholz. The baron never sees her off her guard as I do. Before him she pretends to be as silly as ever, but for some time past I have observed that when she is away from him she both thinks and suffers. Only yesterday I saw her wring her hands together, and overheard her mutter, 'Oh, my darlings! my murdered darlings!'"

Hugel listened with absorbing interest.

"Then she is playing a deep game, you may be sure. Well, well, Katrina, keep your own counsel, and we shall be the winners. She will speak to you when her plans are formed—she must do so, you know—and then you can name the price of our assistance. Her diamonds are worth fifty thousand thalers, and, for them, I will find means to remove her from the castle by a secret passage I have discovered since we came back here. It communicates directly with the river, and we could all three effect our escape without much difficulty, in spite of the baron's watchfulness."

"Why, Hugel, you must have been thinking of this a long time," said his wife, in surprise.

"Not very long. The discovery I have just spoken of first led me to think that we could serve our own interests by getting our poor lady away from this grim old den, where she had suffered so much indignity. As long as she was unfit to go out in the world I said nothing about it to you, but now that you say she is coming back to her senses I see no reason why we should not do a good turn by ourselves, at the same time that we help her to regain her freedom."

This practical view of the position Katrina fully understood, and was soon prepared to act on. She watched her mistress unceasingly, and every day tended to strengthen her belief in what she had asserted to her husband. The woman finally ventured to precipitate matters by hinting to her lady that she and Hugel were so much devoted to her interests that they would stop at nothing to serve her.

The Electress wistfully regarded her, but on that occasion said nothing in reply. A few days later she proved that she at least understood the motives that actuated the husband and wife by abruptly asking:

"Katrina, at how much does Hugel value his offered services? I know that it must be a question of money between us."

Katrina quickly replied:

"Oh, my lady! If your mind has come back to that point I can truly believe that you are sane as I am. But you are very clever to hoodwink the baron as you do every day."

The princess placed her finger warningly upon her lip. She whispered:

"Don't speak of that, Katrina, for everything depends on my concealing my true self from him. It is my most earnest wish to escape from this place, and if you and Hugel will only aid me to do so I will not despair of success. If we fail I can but die."

"We will not be likely to fail, my lady, for Hugel has made a valuable discovery which will enable us

to get away so long before our flight is discovered that we may safely defy pursuit."

The Electress eagerly inquired into particulars, and Katrina described the subterranean entrance to the castle through which the Duchess of Lindorf had once obtained access to the secret councils of her foe.

When Katrina finished speaking her mistress remained absorbed in thought for several moments. She then said:

"I have no money, but I have jewels that are valuable. My diamonds are worth a large sum, and I will cheerfully give them to him who will be courageous and faithful enough to remove me in safety from these walls. The pearls will suffice for my own needs till I gain justice and vengeance—vengeance for such wrongs as I believe were never put upon one human being before."

These words alarmed Katrina and she hastened to say:

"But, my lady, if we consent to your terms we must first know by what means you intend to right yourself. You will appeal to the Empress, I suppose, as that will be the surest means of getting back your property."

A faint, subtle smile curled the lip of the prisoner, but with a heavy sigh she replied:

"Only get me safely away, Katrina, and I promise to be guided by your husband as long as we remain together. His judgment shall supply what mine lacks."

Nothing could better have suited both husband and wife than this apparent dependence upon them. They entered heart and soul into the plan of escape, and Hugel cautiously made his preparations for the proposed flight.

CHAPTER LVI.

THE princess was skilful in veiling her ulterior intentions from Katrina and Hugel, as in concealing from the baron that he had aroused the Nemesis who was slowly but surely maturing her plan to immolate himself as her first victim.

A week later everything had been prepared for their flight, and late in the afternoon Hugel warned his lady that by midnight she must be in readiness to leave her apartment and accompany him through the secret passages which led to the river outlet. She nodded, smiled significantly, and again placed her fingers on her lips.

A few hours later she went towards the laboratory, carolling a sweet snatch of song, to find the baron again at work at the arms of the Vampire. He smiled on her and told her that he was giving a finishing touch to the complicated springs before replacing the remorseless limbs upon the statue.

She laughed in the vacant manner which always misled him as to her actual condition, and asked:

"What is the use of all that trouble for nothing? The pretty woman can't do mischief now, you told me. Oh, what a lovely face she has! I only wish mine was half as fair."

He regarded her with grim satisfaction.

"It is my fancy to work at the thing so much. It is a marvel of ingenuity and taxes all my mechanical skill to understand it."

She asked, with childish petulance:

"Why don't you let me know something about it? Are you afraid that I shall do some mischief with it?"

And she looked up in his eyes with naive simplicity that completely deceived him. He smiled on her more kindly, and said:

"You shall see the arm put on, and tell me if it works well. I am not now afraid to trust myself in the embrace of the beautiful Vampire, for I have rendered her daggers harmless, unless a particular spring be touched."

"Now what is a vampire? I have forgotten, if I ever knew. It seems to me that I forgot everything." And she pressed her hand to her brow with her old expression of helplessness.

The baron was absorbed with his occupation, and he abstractedly said:

"Never mind now—I have no time to explain at present. This limb is quite ready now, and I need your help to place it exactly right. You may as well make yourself useful as anyone. I will mount upon the pedestal, and you hand the arm up to me. You can then hold the light in such a position as will enable me to fit it perfectly in the socket."

With the docility of a child the princess consented to perform the required service, and with extreme caution the baron placed his feet on either side of the fatal point on which he had forced Oliver to step so many years before.

When he was securely placed he reached out his hand for the beautiful rounded limb which was given to him, and then the princess mounted on a chair and held the wax-light in the position he desired. The busy worker was too much interested in his occupation to cast a glance upon the pale and resolute face that was looking upon him, to mark the baleful fire that gleamed in her bright blue orbs.

She held the candlestick in her right hand, and placed herself in such a position that her left one commanded the button concealed beneath the drapery of the statue, by which she had found means to satisfy herself the concealed daggers were moved.

Aware that it would be necessary for the baron to permit the arms of the statue to close upon himself to make sure that it was accurately fitted, she watched for the moment of action without one throb of pity or remorse; had she been a marble woman she could not have been more unmoved.

The arm was fitted in its position, and with extreme caution the baron removed his foot to the pivot which would cause them both to close upon him. They came to with a sudden snap, and at the same instant the hand of his ruthless Fate touched the spring and pressed with all her force upon it.

A choking cry was heard—a struggle to escape the death-clutch in which he was held, which only accelerated the victim's fate, and the baron, with staring eyes and protruding tongue, was held as in a vice, while his life blood began slowly to patter upon the floor.

When this sound greeted her listening ears the Nemesis sprang down, and with a wild, maniacal laugh, cried out:

"Ha! ha! I am mistress of the situation at last! You have met your deserts at my hand, and now I am going to pay the others for their base treachery to me. You need blood-letting, my dear baron, and I am your best physician. You have long tried your skill on me, and now it is my turn to try mine on you. How do you feel now, my kind and affectionate uncle?"

She bent in mocking respect before the ghastly face that looked down upon her; and, after much effort, he gasped:

"I am dying! Wretch! how dared you do such a thing as this?"

"Oh, oh, my lord, are you the only one who is privileged to be wicked? You have made me a demon, and now you ask such a question as that. You are but the first victim on the list, dearest uncle. Listen and understand me, I pray, for I wish you to know what I am about to do. I shall leave the castle this night, and without a moment's delay seek your precious nephew and his new wife. I shall find them with the new heir she has given him, and if you are as astute as I take you to be you will readily understand why I seek them. Do you begin to comprehend my intentions? Yes, I see that you do. But I will still farther enlighten you. I shall offer all, all, as a sacrifice to the manes of my children, and then heaven knows what will become of myself—I care not."

Her voice sank to a desolate whisper, and the baron, whose life blood was ebbing from so many wounds, made a vain effort to speak again. He felt deathly sick and faint, but at that hour he was hopeless of release from the power of the mad woman he had done so much to enrage. The servants had gone to their own wing of the castle, and it was his habit to sit up late at night without requiring an attendant to wait on him when he retired.

So the cruel baron knew that his doom was sealed, and he closed his eyes in despair.

The Electress stood up before him and rehearsed all her wrongs so clearly that he comprehended how cleverly she had deceived him, and he could have cursed his own recklessness in giving her a chance to recover her cunning so far as to enable her to circumvent him in this fearful manner.

But it was too late. In the terrible game they had played she had won, and he had lost, and he bitterly felt that his life must be the forfeit of his own want of caution.

The great clock in the library rang out eleven. Again the princess lifted the light, surveyed her ghastly-looking enemy, and cried out:

"Adieu! Baron Ardeheim. Tarry on the road to Hades, if you be permitted to do so, and I will send others that you wot of to join you on your journey thither. In five more days the Elector of Lichtenfels, with his wife and son, shall be in the land of shadows."

"His dimming eyes were turned almost with a dying effort upon her, and his pale lips syllabled:

"Mercy—mercy!"

She furiously cried out:

"Mercy! for you—for them! How dare you ask it of one so outraged as I have been? No, no; my heart is stone to every appeal that you can make. Farewell, dear uncle; I will not again say adieu, for I hope there will be no heaven for you, and I would certainly not commend you to its mercy; I would ask no pity for such a wretch as you have proved yourself."

She replaced the light, lifted her garments, and, without a shudder, stepped over the pools of blood which had settled about the base of the statue. She paused at the door to say, in a jeering tone:

"In the morning the servants will find you stark and rigid in the arms of your charming Vampire, who by that time will have drunk up all your blood. But they will not find me to hand over to the tender mercies of my recreant husband. I go, Baron Ardeheim, to freedom, to vengeance, and the house of Lichtenfels shall fall into ruins beneath the hand of a woman maddened by her unparalleled wrongs."

The door closed on her, the key was turned in the lock, withdrawn, and dashed through an open window into the stream which flowed darkly beneath them. Then the Electress turned quietly towards her own apartment to prepare for immediate flight.

CHAPTER LVII.

WHEN Katrina found her mistress in her chamber she detected nothing unusual in her face, save an expression of exulting triumph, which she easily traced to the prospect of speedy escape from her prison.

The tragedy that had been enacted in the baron's room was carefully concealed from both husband and wife, but when the three fugitives passed the door of his apartment with extreme caution, lest they might be overheard by him, the Electress with difficulty restrained the wild laugh of exultation that arose to her lips.

Hugel led the way towards the secret staircase, and by the light of a lantern he carried in his hand they descended to the subterranean chamber before described, through which the Duchess of Lindorf had been taken by Herman.

As then, a boat was moored beneath the floor, into which the princess and her attendant were assisted by Hugel. He then sprang in, and rapidly pushed it out into the stream.

The night was clear and starlit, but he had little fear of being seen from the castle, unless the baron should happen to be looking out on the river at the moment they glided past his lighted windows. He whispered some such apprehension, in reply to which the princess laughed strangely. She presently said:

"Have no fears on the baron's account, my good Hugel. He will never interfere with us again. I left him half asleep an hour ago, and by this time he is fast enough in the arms of Somnus to be oblivious of all we may do."

"I hope so, my lady, for the baron is a hard hand to deal with. If he got us back again there's no knowing what he might not do."

"But then he will never get us back, I tell you. No—never—never! Row fast, my trusty Hugel, for I am eager to be at my journey's end. I have so much to do there, and so little time to do it in. We must not rest upon the way, nor let our energies flag till the end comes."

"I understand, my lady—and the end will be placing you under the protection of the good Empress. After that is done Katrina and I mean to get out of this country as soon as may be."

"Yes—the sooner the better for you, Hugel. Get me safe to Lintz, and I can make my own way from there. I shall no longer require you as a protector, after you have sold my jewels and given me the money the pearls will bring. The diamonds belong to you, and are not too much to repay the great service you have rendered me this night."

"But, my lady, you are not used to travel alone, and I do not think it will be right for us to leave you till you are safe in Vienna."

She made a movement of impatience, but said nothing. They passed the fall in safety, and as long as a ray of light could be seen from the illuminated windows of the baron's room the Electress gazed backward, dwelling with a kind of wild intoxication on the vengeance she had taken on one of her foes.

(To be continued.)

THE immense cannon which Prussia has sent to the Exhibition, it is said, will at each discharge consume powder and ball to the value of 1,000*l.*, and will kill 500 men each time, which, if we calculate rightly, is two francs a head. Not dear!

VIRGINIA.

CHAPTER XII.

CORA remained in the room some time after Seymour left it, walking up and down, sometimes slowly, sometimes with the quick, impetuous tread of an empress whose power was threatened. Her heart was in a tumult of passionate feeling. The wild rush of joy that had overwhelmed her when she first saw Seymour still beat in her bosom and crimsoned her cheeks. So far as love is a passion she felt it deeply towards that man—felt it with that blind impulse which would have overmastered any obstacle and rendered her capable almost of goodness, if that alone could have united them. She would not have married him penniless, because self-sacrifice was not in her nature, but she possessed force of character enough to surmount any difficulty which lay between them, and all the endowments her ambition craved.

"He is young, accomplished, ambitious, splendidly handsome," she said to herself. "What more can I ask? One thing, and that I will procure. It requires courage, audacity, an iron tenacity of will, almost impossible self-possession; but I have all these things. This thought has been in my mind too long for failure. All its points have been well considered. They cannot fail unless she has grown generous or cowardly—no, she is not old enough for that. I know all her weak points—a love of display, luxurious habits, a hatred of the class from which she sprang. No, I cannot fail with her. Well, the others? This man, for instance, he is easily managed; but then Eunice, that sharp, hard old woman, who never forgets. Well, I have courage even to defy her."

Here Cora took out her watch, started on finding how late it was, and hurried up to her room. Without a moment's delay she changed her dress, enveloped herself in a water-proof cloak, tied a thick veil over her bonnet, and, locking the door after her, went down into the street, passing unobserved as some woman going about her ordinary business. She beckoned a cab which stood near the entrance, and ordered it to be driven to the station.

The train started slowly, and then went with some caution through the streets, seeming to scatter back stars along its path as it passed lamp-post after lamp-post, linking them as it were in a swift chain of fire.

Cora sat still muffled close in her cloak of dull gray, and with her brown barège veil drawn close over her face. She had no luggage, not even a travelling-basket or satchel, and sat motionless, looking out of the window as if something entralling lay in the dark rush of the river and the broken shore along which she was whirled.

At the nearest station to the Landers' dwelling she arose, softly gathered the cloak around her, and stepped out upon the platform. She was not the only person set down at that point, but a few moments found her standing there, as she supposed, alone, while the train rushed up the river bank panting under every pulse of its fiery heart.

When the train had disappeared like a huge black serpent scaled sparsely with sparks of fire this young girl turned and walked hastily towards a flight of steps which led up the terrace and which would conduct her at once to the lawn in front of the late Mr. Lander's dwelling. Even in the darkness she could detect the gleam of the white marble pillars, and a lofty facade breaking through the night, contrasted with the huge trees that encompassed them with a world of black shadows.

It was a weird picture of home to which the young girl came, like a thief and with the thoughts of a robber in her heart. If the darkness had permitted it her face would have shone out white and hard almost as the marble on which her eyes turned with such burning greed. She stood a moment on the verge of the terrace regarding the building, which stood outlined in the sable cloud which surrounded it with vast spectral indistinctness. Even thus it was a noble pile, appealing grandly to the imagination, and her heart swelled with rapacious satisfaction as she thought of its value.

After a little while she began to regard the house with other thoughts. Her eyes wandered over the building in search of a light, which she hoped to find shining through some of the windows. But none appeared, and she walked on, burying her footsteps in the crisp grass of the lawn, for it was too dark for any hope of finding a path. There was no wavering or hesitation about her. Swiftly as a human being could walk, she passed through the shadows and turned an angle of the house. In the window of a second-storey room, which overlooked a portion of the lawn most thickly planted with flowers, a faint light was burning behind curtains of white lace, which softened it as clouds envelope a star.

"That is her room, I know," muttered the girl:

"she never slept without a light. But she has changed apartments with her new fortunes. That used to be a spare chamber."

As she spoke the light seemed to waver as if someone held it unsteadily. It was only the curtain stirred by a gentle wind, for the sash was open that pleasant summer night, and Mrs. Lander, being an epicure, loved to have the perfume from the dewy flowers wafted to her as she slept.

"Thank heaven for that coward habit of a night lamp," thought the girl, stealing softly around the house in search of some unbolted door through which she might let herself in. She tried the back doors first, but to no avail. Then searched for an open window, but Eunice had taken care that no means of entrance should be left exposed. On the ground floor every point was locked and guarded.

After satisfying herself of this fact Cora went round to the flower garden again, resolved, by some means, to reach the window which had at first occupied so much of her attention. Sharp and vigilant as a fox, she searched the wall for some means of ascent, but the white marble was as smooth as snow-crusted, and nothing but a vast rose-bush broke its polished surface. This bush, however, hung loosely on the wall, and its branches swayed to and fro in the flickering light. Cora was seized with a wild impulse to climb up this uncertain support, and thus, if possible, reach the window. She seized the rose-bush by the stem and brought it down violently, with all its blossoming branches trailing on the grass. In starting back Cora trod upon something hard, which almost threw her down. She groped in the grass at her feet and found that she had stumbled against a small garden ladder, abandoned there the day before, when the gardener had left his task unfinished and the rose-bush but half fastened to the wall.

With an effort, Cora forced back the exclamation of joy that sprang to her lips, and raising the ladder, placed it against the wall, where its top round reached the window-sill. She settled it firmly, tried it with her foot, then ascended it round by round with the noiseless agility of a cat. With her feet upon the ladder and her hands grasping the marble sill, she looked into the chamber, while the light shone full upon her face. It was flushed with exertion, and her eyes shone like diamonds as they cast an eager glance at the white bed, clouded by volumes of lace, and thence to an easy-chair of blue damask standing on a carpet white as ermine, on which bouquets and garlands of spring flowers seemed to have been flung. Supporting herself by the window-sill with one hand, Cora raised the sash gently with the other, drew back her head, and entered the chamber with a bound. The noise that she might have made was lost in the moss-like pile of the carpet, which yielded like snow under her feet.

All this time a stout man stood beneath the willow, which drooped over him like the curving waters of a fountain, and watched her movements attentively. But as she disappeared through the window he moved on towards the stables, muttering:

"Well, it ain't none of my business. It's one of 'em, and that's enough."

Cora, unconscious of his presence, paused a moment to listen, then moved towards the bed and flung back the curtains with both hands.

Mrs. Lander lay upon her pillow, frilled, laced, and embroidered with that excess of ornament which those who come suddenly into the possession of riches are apt to affect. A quantity of Valenciennes lace lay softly around her forehead and temples; her plump white hand crept out from frills edged with the same rich material, and the bosom of her night-dress presented one mass of lace and embroidery.

She was a tolerably handsome woman, and these things became her well, though a close observer would have understood something of the suddenness of her late good fortune in the elaborate night-dress. Cora Lander's proud lip curled, and a gleam of malicious humour shot into her eyes.

"Upon my word, she dashes into the thing with a will," was her thought. "All her toilet bottles mounted with gold—hands loaded with diamonds even in her sleep! How self-satisfied she looks! No wonder—no wonder—a property like this might make anyone sleep complacently!"

CHAPTER XIII.

CORA LANDER bent close to the sleeping woman's ear and uttered the word "mother," in one of those sharp, sudden whispers which thrill the heart even in slumber.

Mrs. Lander started up with a faint cry, and pressing one elbow into the down of her pillow, gave a wild stare at the face bending over her.

"Who is this? What are you?" she cried, in sudden terror.

"Mother! mother! surely you know me!"

"Know you! know you! I was dreaming of those eyes, but not of you. My child was younger, trainter, lovelier. She is drowned! She is drowned! What do you want with me? I do not know you. How dare you call me mother?"

The woman spoke wildly, almost with defiance. Her hands quivered under their lace ruffles; the embroidery on her bosom rose and fell with a sudden spasm of dread.

"Mother, you know me well enough; I am Cora Lander, your own child."

"My own child?"

"You thought me dead, I daresay. But here I am, safe and well. Touch my hand—that will prove it."

"But—but you are taller. You're a woman!" gasped the mother.

"A girl grows taller in eight years. But look close, mother—you would have known me by daylight."

"No, no, I shouldn't—I don't. The hair is like, but darker—the eyes—the mouth—that smile. Cora! Cora Lander! my child; my child!"

All the motherhood of the woman sprang into action then. She seized the young girl in her arms, and rained kisses upon her, sobbing, laughing, and shivering under a rush of natural tenderness that drove all selfishness out of her heart. At last she pushed the girl back from her bosom and examined her face line by line.

"And you have come back—my child! my darling!"

"Hush! hush! we are having too much of this," said the girl, sitting down on the bed. "Someone will hear us."

"Well, why should they not? They will all know in the morning."

"I think not, dear aunt!"

"Dear aunt! What is this for? But it reminds me that perhaps you and I are paupers. What has become of him? Is he alive too?"

"No, thank heaven! he is safe, fathoms deep!"

Mrs. Lander drew a deep breath.

"Oh, dear! it seems terrible to hear you say this!" she said, with a frightened look. "But if he were alive what should we do? Poverty! poverty! poverty! I couldn't endure that after having so much!"

"But it may come upon us yet," said the daughter.

"How? how? Oh, I remember—that other Cora, the girl they called Virginia. But she is fathoms deep too."

"She is alive and well in London, at this moment," said Cora, dryly.

"What? what?" cried the woman, struggling with an hysterical rush of feeling. "She alive! Then we are a thousand times worse off than if Lander had lived. He was kind and generous enough. But that child, with her soft ways, and that smile, acting always as if she had been born a lady. I would rather starve than take my bread from her! Oh, what will become of us?"

"That is what I came in the dead of night to talk to you about. No one knows that I am here—no one must know anything about it. Do try and be calm; everything depends on that."

"Well, child, I am calm. Despair has this one good quality—it brings dead repose with it. After a little time I shall find strength to look this thing in the face. But it is hard."

"I know that, mother. You have not tasted the bitterness of dependence alone. I know what it must be to give up a fortune like this. But how came you with it? Did my uncle make a will? The man you sent to London with a pair of horses told me so."

"Yes, he made a will—all to no purpose now. Oh, it was to no purpose!"

"And how did this will read? Tell me."

"It gave everything to her."

"Everything! And you blundered like that?"

"Yes, Cora. He wrote it with his own hand. Upon my life and honour, it was every word in his own handwriting!"

"But was that all? The law would have given it to her!"

"Yes, yes, I know; but the law, instead of giving you and me a chance of the whole, would have scattered it among those country cousins. That was what made Lander's will valuable. If she died without children you came next, and I after."

"Indeed! Then it was under this will that you took possession. It is hard on you that we are alive—hard on me too, for Virginia may marry and have half a dozen children to cut us out. Will do all this, certainly, if we let her."

"But how can we help it? What have we to do but sink back into our old dependence?"

"Mother, listen to me," said Cora, in a hard, firm voice.

"Well, I listen," was the wondering answer. "But how hard your face looks—there is no childhood left in you, Cora Lander."

"I hope not, for the thing I came to talk about is no child's play. It needs firmness, courage, audacity even. I fear you will be wanting in these qualities when the test comes."

"Why do you fear me because I am taken by surprise, when roused out of a sound sleep, to find you at my bedside—not white and dripping, as I have seen you so often in my dreams—not the child whose brightness I was so proud of—but a calm, hard woman, taking the lead, even with me, your own mother."

"True, true, there is something in that. The surprise was enough to stagger anyone. I might have bent under it myself, especially after tasting the sweetness of such wealth. But what I am thinking of requires the most consummate coolness, nerves of iron, a face of marble. It requires that determination which enables a man to commit what the world calls crime quietly, firmly. You could never do that."

Mrs. Lander looked at her daughter half in triumph, half affrighted.

"You say this to test me, Cora—to make yourself certain that I am incapable of wrong. You suspect me perhaps."

"No no; I wish that were possible."

"What possible?"

"Why, that you had the courage to reach forth your hand for this noble inheritance."

"But I have the courage. You do not know—"

"Yes, the courage to submit."

"No, to struggle—to fight. Only all struggles are hopeless now."

"But you have not the courage, I repeat, to commit what men might call a crime, even to make your child, and through her yourself, heiress of all this wealth."

"What—what is it you mean? Are you setting up an inquisition over your own mother? Of what can you suspect me?"

Mrs. Lander was deadly pale, her mouth contracted itself, her eyes gleamed with apprehension.

The girl looked into that craven face with keen inquiry. It puzzled even her penetration. If the mere thought of wrong had so disturbed her mother, there was little hope that the scheme which had brought her there could be carried out. But her searching eye soon discovered more than the mere revolt of innocent conscience in this strange agitation. There was actual guilt in that face. What could that guilt be? Quick as lightning that sharp intellect ran over all possible causes for this singular agitation, and settled on the will.

"I only suspect, mother, that you tampered with Uncle Lander's will."

Mrs. Lander fell back upon her pillow, white and breathless.

"The will—the will!" she whispered. "Who told—who has dared?"

"Be tranquil, do be tranquil, mother," said the girl, taking the trembling hand put forth to repulse her and kissing it tenderly. "All this makes our way clear. I do not blame you. What else could you do?"

"It would all have gone to those stupid cousins," pleaded the woman. "Besides, the will was his, every word."

"Except the names," said Cora, gently. "I understand. Well, after all, that was risking a great deal, while my plan has positively no danger in it."

"But will it secure the property?" asked the mother, anxiously.

"Yes."

"To me, just as it is now and without danger?"

"Not to you; that is impossible."

Mrs. Lander's face contracted with disappointment, while her daughter went on:

"But through me, your only child, everything can be done."

Mrs. Lander did not speak, but her eyes asked eager questions.

"What matters it?" said the girl, "which is absolute owner here? Am not a mother and daughter one?"

"But it seems most natural that a mother should possess the power," faltered Mrs. Lander.

"And so you shall in everything but the name. Only aid me in getting possession, and there will be no dispute about power between us."

"But how?"

"It is easy, mother, and perfectly safe. To-morrow, when we come home, forget that I am your daughter, and in my place accept the girl called Virginia Lander."

Mrs. Lander rose up slowly to a sitting posture in the bed, her eyes were full of wild light, her lips parted.

"What!"

Cora answered this sharp exclamation very calmly.

"We two girls are so much alike that people take us for twins. We have been away from the country eight years. No human being is qualified to contradict you when you claim Virginia and disown me. No other evidence of identity will be needed, even if it come to a court of law. I shall support you—from the first I shall recognize you only as my aunt, claim Amos Lander as my father, and quietly take the position of his child. By what force can she dislodge me?"

Mrs. Lander sank back on the pillows, astounded by the bold scheme which was to deprive her of a daughter.

"Let me rest—let me think," she said; "the audacity of this thing appals me."

"Do think—reflect; nothing can be safer. It is simply to say a thing and persist in it."

"But the people abroad—those who knew you both at the schools—should there be a contest they will be called as witnesses."

"What then? They know nothing. We passed as Mr. Lander's children—no distinction was ever made; I doubt if anyone knew that we were not sisters. Thanks to Virginia's sensitive generosity, she never spoke of my dependant position, and as for Uncle Lander he always introduced us on shipboard and elsewhere as Miss Lander and Miss Cora Lander."

Mrs. Lander drew a deep breath; the anxiety was dying out from her face.

"And this would make you heiress of everything?" she said. "But where would my claim be?"

"In your power to dispossess me by a word. That would make you, in fact, mistress here."

"True, true; but they might force me to swear that you were not my child; then my power of retreat would be cut off."

Cora Lander could be sweet and affectionate enough when it pleased her to put forth these gentle qualities. She stooped down to her mother, threw one arm caressingly over her and pressed half a dozen soft kisses on her face.

"It is for us both—for you, dear mother, more than myself. I am ready to risk something rather than see you cast back into poverty. Think how hard it will be to give all this luxury up to another—think of my fate, compelled to take every mouthful of bread I eat from her bounty. Mother, if you prove coward and force me to this I shall hate you!"

"If we could share it together I would not hesitate, but the wrong and falsehood will be all mine, the reward yours."

"Only in name, sweet mother—only in name. The wealth and power you shall possess alike with myself."

"But this girl, this poor Virginia, whom we are wronging so—what will become of her?"

"Let her stay here and learn the bitter lesson she has taught you and me—that of a poor relative subsisting on a rich man's bounty. We must change places: I will be graciously kind, and killingly generous to her, as she has been to us."

"But she will protest—appeal to the law."

"Let her; without proof against that best of evidence, the woman's who claims to be her mother, what will her protest amount to?"

How well this young creature had considered her plans; not a thread of the web was wanting; even the law itself seemed powerless to break into its meshes; never did a fraud seem more certain of success.

The widow had yielded herself to Cora's blandishments; they seemed to insure her a splendid future. With a creature like that, so beautiful and bright, wealth would have tenfold value. The joy of her child's return was mingled with all this. She loved the fair young creature with new-born affection. Her voice was sweet, her smile persuasive. The very crime that she proposed assimilated so well with that already committed by herself, that it broke down the barriers of reserve which long absence and the change from childhood to womanliness would naturally have produced. Sympathy either in good or evil draws hearts close together. Cora leaned towards her mother and kissed her cheek, which was scarlet and hot with struggling emotions.

"Say, now," she pleaded, "if you and I are to be mistresses of this noble property, this house with all its luxurious appliances, or beggars again?"

"Cora, I never could endure that. Possession has been too sweet. This broad, free sense of independence has expanded my whole life. I love to give orders and receive the homage of those whom money has made the slaves of my will. I love to feel that the marble under my feet is mine to tread upon or tear up as I will; the fruit and flowers growing around me are mine, mine to give, keep, sell, or leave on the boughs. Cora, I never knew till now the entire bitterness of poverty, the abject humiliation of dependance."

"But all this must come unless you act as I wish."

"Yes, I see; I see. But to give my own fair child and take another in her place, one *too* whom I have wronged so, that seems impossible."

"I know, I know; but in secret I shall still be your child."

"But I shall be nothing, not even mother to the heiress."

"You will be her aunt. The most loved and honoured relative that ever controlled a household. Besides, pray remember, a few months will put this entire property into my hands, then I can divide it with you."

"And will you? She too can be provided for, and it will not seem so hard."

"We will think of that—but tell me now, are you prepared? Will you promise to be firm? In a little time the train will come down; I must be assured of my position before I go."

"I wish Eunice were here!"

"Eunice, the hard-faced woman with the red hair? Surely you do not trust people like her!"

"She is—" Mrs. Lander stopped suddenly, checked herself, and added, as if from some afterthought, "She is faithful and devoted to me."

"Mother," said Cora, with great firmness, "this secret rests between us two. On your life, I charge you, share it with no other living soul! That would be to make ourselves slaves indeed."

"Not with Eunice? Not with Eunice?" almost pleaded the widow.

"Mother, a secret shared is an object lost. What is this iron-faced woman to us, that we should take her into our souls?"

"Eunice—Eunice. Oh, nothing but a faithful old servant, who loved me well before I became rich."

"Let her remain a faithful servant, nothing more," answered Cora. "I want no confidants bred in the kitchen, no love from any quarter which cannot be paid for with money. So let her pass, for we have but little time. I hear a clock striking, or rather giving out fairy music. What sumptuous tastes you have, mother! It would be a pity to give all these pretty things up to my cousin!"

"That I never will—never! never!" cried Mrs. Lander.

"Then be firm, and prepare to receive that other one as your daughter. Good-night, I must go now."

"Good-night! With these words we are torn apart never again to be mother and child! Heaven has given you back to me, and in your place I take money got by crime."

Mrs. Lander spoke low, but with deep, passionate feeling. She was not hard by nature, like the fair young girl who looked down upon her, beautiful as Lucifer and almost as wicked.

"This is sentiment—nonsense—and such things are out of place when an object like this lies before us. We can love each other and live together. Why not? Aunts are often very, very fond of their nieces. It excites no wonder."

"No, no; crime strangles love."

"Not with the strong and bold. Take courage, you have little to do; I am not afraid to lead the way."

Cora turned towards the window, gathering her cloak tightly around her. Mrs. Lander sprang out of bed and followed her with both trembling hands held out.

"One embrace, Cora! Let me feel you close to my heart before you go! Call me mother again!"

"There, mother, am I close enough? Why, how you tremble!"

"My child!"

"There! there! kiss me a hundred times if you like; but when that little clock chimes the quarter I must be gone. Why, how foolish you are! how weak! We shall meet again to-morrow or next day, and there will be no more parting."

"Crime parts everything, Cora; I have learned that already. Heaven help us! It had almost reconciled me to your death, and now that you have come back, awakening my heart to its old tenderness, you would pile up barriers between us. No! no! let us be poor again—very poor! I shall not care, so long as we are innocent and love each other."

"But I should not love you."

"Don't say that! I could give these things up, indeed I could!"

"And repine over it for ever after. Know yourself better; but this argument would last for ever. Once for all, will you act as I desire?"

"Yes! yes!"

"That is right. Now I love you dearly. You shall be the grand dame of the establishment."

"I know that you will be kind, dear."

"Trust me. There goes the quarter—good-bye! good-bye!"

When the last word left her lips Cora was outside upon the ladder, with her beautiful face uplifted to the light. In an instant she glided downwards into



[MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.]

the darkness. The ladder was drawn after her and fell softly to its old place in the grass. A branch of the rose-bush swayed back, as if something had dragged it out of place, and that was all.

CHAPTER XIV.

Mrs. LANDER sprang out of bed and ran to the window, resolved to call her daughter back and revoke the evil promise she had made. She leaned out into the chill air, careless of the wind, which ruffled her night-dress as if it had been snow, searching for her child in the darkness. As her eyes got accustomed to the gloom she saw what seemed like a deeper shadow fluttering on the edge of the terrace, but that was all.

The rattle of a coming train in the far distance kept her at the window. The noise grew louder, wilder and more impetuous. Then a great burning eye, fiery and seemingly bloodshot, glared out from the blackness of crowded trees, lighting them up like the smile of a demon, and a shriek, horrible in its shrillness, cut through the night, making the woman's heart quake in her bosom as if a fiend had mocked her. Then came the sharp clang of a bell, the rattle of iron, and the train swept away again, rushing off like a storm.

Mrs. Lander listened to its receding noises with absolute terror. It seemed as if some awful visitation had left her there trembling and helpless. Such dreams had visited her before. Mr. Lander himself had come upon her from mountainous waves dripping wet, and with his gray air turned to icicles, clamouring for his property. Her daughter, too, had haunted her sleep, crying for help from some yawning gulf of waters, and she had seen Lander's heiress dancing fantastic flings on the surface of a calm ocean, bright as quicksilver. All these apparitions had demanded a restitution of the property she had just begun to enjoy with such zest.

The struggle to retain it and yet allow them to come out free from their prison in the great crystal deep had often aroused her out of these dreams sobbing in dread and bathed in cold perspiration. But hard as these dreams had been upon her, nothing could equal the scene that had just swept past her. Was it real? Could it be a vision, like the rest, tormenting her sleep? She pressed her hands on the marble window-sill and leaned out into the night, searching wildly for some trace of the presence that had seemed so real.

The slow rush of the river sweeping towards the

ocean just below the terrace, and a soft shiver of leaves, were all the sound she heard. Nothing was visible save the outline of the flower-beds and groups of shrubbery merging dimly into the pale gray light which was just beginning to dawn in the East.

The woman drew back with a sob of grateful relief. A new class of demons had begun to haunt her. Fiery trains, trailing smoke as they went, out of which came her daughter, more beautiful than she had ever dreamed of, to tempt her into new crimes, had been coursing through her sleep. This vision had driven her out of bed into the chilly night air. All about her shoulders and bosom the linen robe she wore was wet with dew. She was shivering with cold in all her limbs. For the world she would not encounter another vision like that. Such things were getting to be frightfully real. Eunice should sleep in the next room and that would be a protection hereafter.

She withdrew from the window and crept into bed, shuddering with cold, but rest was impossible. She had been too severely shocked. All that she could do was to lie there with her eyes wide open and watch the daylight as it crept across the window. At last a sunbeam shot through the lace curtains, silencing them like a cloud and filling her room with light.

It was very strange, but the brilliancy and stir of morning only made that vision more definite and certain. Before this her dreams had vanished with the darkness, but this—its distinctness terrified her. She reached forth her hand, it fell upon a hollow place on the counterpane. Lifting herself up from the pillows, she examined the spot. It was certainly wet, and pressed down as if some person in damp garments had been sitting there. She remembered that figure in the gray cloak with its hood falling back, and a sick feeling crept over her. Was it reality? Could it be that Cora, in her natural person, had occupied that place?

She started from the bed, resolved to search for other traces of the strange presence. Once more she leaned from the window, looking forth upon as bright a sunrise as ever blessed the earth. A shimmer of dew lay upon everything—grass, leaves and branches were bright with it. A rain of diamonds trembled on the great drooping willows, and the flowers knew a double brilliancy, for the sunshine turned the moisture in their cups to a living fire. All this dazzled the woman without satisfying her. She leaned out of the window, searching the grass beneath it. A ladder lay half buried in the grass,

but near it, slanting down one side, was the print of all its rounds and supporters pressed into the turf like a material shadow, if that could be. Straggling out from under this ladder was a broken rose branch, full of sap and fresh at the splintered end.

Away from that, crossing the lawn, a trail of small footprints was plainly visible leading to the terrace stairs.

The faintness of slow fear fell upon Mrs. Lander as she saw all this. She could not yet imagine that her child was alive, the impression left by her presence was still so weird. But she knew that the vision of that night could never be shaken off—that, as a blessing or a curse, she must meet it with all her intellect and all her strength.

The woman did not go back to her bed. Those wild, bright eyes were too widely opened for that, but she dressed herself in haste, stopping in deep thought sometimes with the comb drawn half through her hair, and gazing on herself in the glass, as if that image had been her enemy, for minutes together; then she would hurry on her garments with sudden impetuosity and drop into thought as before.

The woman had no object in this; for when she was dressed the whole effort ended in a hurried walk up and down the room with an energy that was almost appalling, for her feet gave forth no sound from the moss-like carpet, and the workings of her face took unnatural force from the stillness, as if the passions within her were smitten with dumb agony.

Thus it was that Eunice found her mistress when she came to her chamber, late in the morning. No, not exactly thus, for, at the first sound of a step in the hall, Mrs. Lander drove the trouble back from her face, and quietly asking if breakfast were ready, went downstairs. She had resolved to keep her own secret, had forced herself to await the hardest lesson an ardent nature ever learned.

During the first hours in which this woman was mustering her strength Cora Lander, who had haunted her like a ghost, was being whirled towards London with passengers sound asleep or too drowsy to notice her. There she sat folded in her cloak, vigilant and thoughtful. So far, her proceedings had passed unnoticed, but it would be daylight when she reached London, and great caution might be needed on entering the hotel.

She glided away up the stairs to her own chamber, and no human being, save one, ever knew positively that she had left it.

(To be continued.)



GOLDEN FAVOURS

CHAPTER X.

MONSIEUR L'ESTRANGE'S gallant black steed galloped over the ground in good style and was reined up sharply in the avenue of Tanglewood, when his rider descried the tall, spare figure pacing sedately to and fro.

"Bonsoir, Monsieur Dacus. This is a fine evening. I am happy to meet you here, safe out of view of prying eyes. I have a little private message from your niece."

While he spoke monsieur vaulted lightly from the saddle, and clapped Monsieur Dacus familiarly on the shoulder, which made the latter gentleman draw himself up to his stateliest height, and reply, with freezing dignity:

"Monsieur L'Estrange, I believe. I have the honour to wish you good-evening, Monsieur L'Estrange. Just now I am preoccupied—indeed, I may say I am *seldom* accessible to chance visitors."

Monsieur gave a little French shrug with his shoulders as Mr. Dacus waved him off with a kingly gesture, and returned, coolly:

"But won't it come under the head of particular visitors if I come from Mademoiselle Evangeline in reference to last night's affair? eh, Monsieur Dacus?"

The irate owner of Tanglewood wheeled round slowly.

"What more does the girl want? Her vagaries are growing troublesome."

"Why, you know I brought a letter last night to make arrangements about taking care of a choice plant, you—understand, Monsieur Dacus."

"I do," replied the gentleman, haughtily.

"Ahem! Well, sir—" Monsieur made a little pause, mentally adding: "The obstinate mule. It goes against my inclination to humour him; but I see that I shall never get along without flattery. *Allons!*" and then continued, briskly: "I need not give a gentleman of your fine intuitions and solid judgment my opinion of the matter, for you will know just how it stands without any help of mine. Indeed, I should rather sit at your feet—to speak figuratively—and learn to discern things in their true light. I have a great respect for your profound learning, your far-seeing sagacity."

Mr. Dacus's haughty crest was lowered a little. He turned somewhat more graciously. Monsieur's keen eye saw it, and he had made his master stroke, and triumphed.

[MRS. SERAPHINA'S ROMANCE INVADED.]

"Monsieur Dacus," said he, "why do you hide yourself in this seclusion? Do you not know that such brilliant lights ought to shine forth freely? When your niece is safely off your hands you must go out into the world and fulfil the high destiny for which your genius and learning fit you."

"Monsieur L'Estrange," exclaimed Mr. Dacus, stretching forth his long thin hand, and clasping the delicate, aristocratic member of Monsieur Pierre, "you have an appreciative spirit. I hail you as a friend."

"You honour me too much. I shall be overjoyed at the condescension; but am I worthy?"

"This is a grand country for a man of power, after all. I have just been skirmishing on the outside of the political world. I mean to go deeper, and if the public press possess discrimination like yours, who can say how soon they may profit by my abilities? Confidentially, monsieur, I admit that I have my pet schemes, and my ambitions."

"Ah, Monsieur Dacus, you shall electrify me with the recital at some very early day. There is no time to-night. I shall not consent to any abridgement, I shall not be willing to tear myself away until I have heard the whole, so do not tantalize me. But this business upon which your niece sent me. Let me see, what was I to say? Oh, there's a deal of excitement about the robbery, and some talk of making a search. You are to give to me the package, the box and those things you know, to keep snug till the thing is blown over."

"The whole affair is a mystery," exclaimed Mr. Dacus, peevishly. "I had a mind not to pay any attention to the note, running my neck into such dangerous places at such unheard-of hours, a man of my prospects too. But the girl has an imperiousness about her which one instinctively acknowledges for authority. I went over there sorely against my will, and I was angry enough that she didn't come and give some explanation, instead of tossing me a bundle as though I were a thief or a vagabond. So she wants them out of my hands. Hum, it's a good thing to be prompt and decided. Evangeline purchased those diamonds of hers with money that should have been paid into my hands. To punish her for her wilfulness I have taken them to a jeweller to-day, and sold them again!"

And Mr. Dacus clapped his hand on his pocket, where the result of this very clever stratagem had renewed the plumpness of a woefully collapsed purse.

Monsieur was quick to understand matters, and his mellow laugh chimed in with Mr. Dacus's vigorous chuckle.

"So then the diamonds are gone. But I think her anxiety is chiefly for the other—the paper box, you know."

"She told me not to disturb the papers, and I left them. The diamonds I was to put out of sight until she came home. You see I have followed her directions there, just the same."

"I always knew you were a clever diplomatist, Monsieur Dacus. I can see just how the dark eyes of your niece will dilate when she learns of this little move of yours."

"She did not ask you to take them, did she?" asked Mr. Dacus, somewhat anxiously.

"No. As I said before, the paper box is the principal thing, and as I am to get back to-night would you be so good as to get it for me now?"

As monsieur in his absence stood tapping his polished boot impatiently with his slender riding-whip he suddenly paused. A low rustle in a great rose hedge had drawn his attention; carelessly humming an opera air, he sauntered towards it, with his eyes apparently fully engaged in watching the silvery disc of the queen of night as it sailed majestically along its blue pathway. But when once opposite he wheeled sharply round and pounced upon a crouching figure there. A low shriek, an hysterical burst of weeping, and Mrs. Seraphina's plump body swooped away out of the reach of his hands.

Monsieur kept down his merriment as best he could.

"Madame Earle! I beg ten thousand pardons *Ma foi!* I thought it was some prowling thief. Upon my *parole d'honneur* I never suspected it could be madame."

"Rude monster! You frightened away such a lovely dream. I came out into this lovely moonlight. Does it not thrill your soul with ecstasy? I sat down on yonder bank, and inhaling the sleeping fragrance of the nodding roses, the rude heartless world faded away from me. I was lost in the blissful atmosphere of poetry and romance. I forgot the cold sneers of coarse, unsympathizing souls; I was happy knowing nothing of anyone near to break the charm with such cruel rudeness."

"I beg ten thousand pardons; madame must be generous and forgive me."

"I heard only the song of the stars and the whisper of the zephyr," pursued Mrs. Seraphina, lifting her pale eyes in sentimental fervour to the skies.

Then madame knows nothing of the grosser talk of mortals on the earth. *N'importe.* It were of no account if she had, for I take it we are all in the same

boat, with our wise and sagacious Monsieur Dacus for captain. If we sink, plump go all the rest into the water."

"I don't know about being in the same boat. Of one thing I am certain. No one consults me with reference to the affair, no one tells me in what direction we are sailing. I wondered what it could mean that mysterious note you brought, and my husband's absence last night. But I am a person of no consequence. No one trusts me, no one gives me explanations. Thank heaven, I have wit enough to find out occasionally for myself."

And Mrs. Seraphina tossed her head, took the attitude of a tragedy queen, and looked up at the moon.

Monsieur was enjoying this with all the zest of a nature slightly satirical and keenly sensitive to everything ludicrous. A wicked smile was on his lips as he said, quietly:

"Monsieur Dacus comes, I hear his step. Does madame care for his knowledge of her rapt ecstasy behind the rose-bushes?"

"I—I think I will go into the house," stammered Mrs. Seraphina, and crept precipitately out of sight.

"Exit madame, enter her lord and master," muttered Monsieur Pierre, in a dull voice.

Mr. Dacus was out of breath, but he thrust the package into the Frenchman's hand.

"Take it and hurry away. I am quite certain I was followed as I came through the garden; I heard stealthy steps distinctly. I must get up the servants, and find out what it means."

He was evidently seriously alarmed.

Monsieur Pierre, however, was anxious to get away, and he did not refuse to profit by the opportunity.

"I shall come again, Monsieur Dacus, to listen to your profound discovery. *Adieu*."

And clasping the precious packet closely, Monsieur Pierre L'Estrange darted down the walk, hastily disengaged the bridle of the horse, vaulted lightly on his back, and went galloping away.

"You could not trust me, Mademoiselle Evangeline; if you choose rather an adversary than an ally, so be it. This *coup d'essai* may not be the last."

Early the next day Monsieur Pierre presented himself at the home of the Halsteads, and never had his spirits seemed so buoyant and exhilarated.

Evangeline watched him nervously and grew uneasy.

There was a playful exultation in his gay talk, which, whenever she caught his eye, seemed to take a serious meaning. Moreover his respectful, delicate flattering manner towards Nannie had a depth of character which vaguely startled as well as pained her.

"What has Monsieur Pierre discovered?" queried she repeatedly, every time growing more and more disturbed.

But Monsieur Pierre did not enlighten her. However, food for other speculation came before the day was out.

Hal was summoned from the dining-room by the arrival of a police-officer, who brought in hand the case of diamonds to be identified by Miss Earle.

"Well done," cried out Hal, returning to the company in high glee. "See what it is to put the affair in able hands. Here are your diamonds, Evangeline, intact. They were carried to a pawnbroker's and sold for half their value, and the description of the man who brought them is in the officer's hands."

He put the case in her hands.

She bent down over them, thus concealing the fact that the sudden news had sent every particle of colour from her face.

"You are to identify them, you know. But they are the same, of course."

The few moments she took for examining the ornaments gave her time to recover her self-possession, and get something of a true idea concerning the appearance of the diamonds at the pawnbroker's shop.

She lifted out the brooch and looked on the under side, just furtively glancing at the police-officer, who stood on the threshold of the door.

"Why, yes," said she, slowly, "they are of the same setting, but there is somehow an unfamiliar look and the mark that should be about the plate is gone. It was a little scratch in the form of a cross. I made it with my scissors one day. You know I never have such ornaments marked with my initials. I get tired of them and like to make a change, with such the mark interferes when one is not wealthy enough to procure new without sacrificing the old. Really I dare not say positively that these are mine. But it is a singular coincidence they should be so much like them."

"You are a wonderful woman, Evangeline Earle," whispered monsieur as he bent down to examine the case, "I yield you my admiration; no one is able to rival you in celerity of wit and ready invention except a certain Monsieur L'Estrange, whose modesty forbids him to speak farther."

Hal Halstead looked extremely surprised and not a little annoyed.

"Your conscientiousness is too sensitive," said he. "You are afraid of taking your oath in the matter, I fancy. Why, you might as well shrink from affirming that your name is Evangeline Earle."

Miss Earle gave him one glance, fierce, startled, tragical. Then passed her lovely white hand across her face and turned smilingly to Hal, lifting her eyes to him with an appealing, innocent truthfulness, very charming for that gentleman to behold.

"I really am afraid to take my oath, dear Hal, because, though they seem like the twin set of mine, there is an odd look attached to them, and the mark is not there."

"They seem like the identical things to me. But, of course, your knowledge of them must be the most accurate. It will be well enough to postpone the matter. Besides, there's a little show of likelihood for mistake, because Nannie's little trinkets are nowhere to be found."

He went back to the officer, and they had a few minutes' earnest conversation, and the latter returned to town taking the diamonds with him.

Evangeline Earle drew one long breath when he was safely out of sight, and sat a long time in deep reverie.

Monsieur found opportunity to say, without being overheard, in his dry, satirical tones:

"Mademoiselle reckoned without her host in trusting diamonds to Mr. Dacus's hands. He will make the money they cost go twice as far in paste, so don't grieve over your lost gems."

She clenched the slender white hand till the purple rings edged the delicate nails.

"Are you *le diable* himself?" hissed she. "What have you been doing?"

"Exercising my wits. Your admirable example gives the contagion. Mademoiselle Evangeline Earle, I congratulate you on your fair prospects."

There was a marked emphasis on the name, and his eyes met her fierce, questioning gaze coolly, and gave some mute reply.

She was leaning at the corner pillar of the veranda. Nannie was in the house. Hal just in sight, at the stable entrance, examining the fastenings of a saddle on the pony she was to ride, before the animal was brought where the fair rider stood in her trailing habit and snowy plumed hat.

Evangeline Earle, turning deadly pale, clutched at the pillar for support.

Monsieur politely offered his arm, but she struck it fiercely.

"You do not love me—you have never loved me," she said, shivering.

"Pardon, mademoiselle. Your image drew me all the way across the ocean into this land of semi-barbarism. If I could tear myself from *la belle France* for your sake, was it not ample proof of my affection for *mon ami*?"

"Pierre, Pierre, if you love me how can you try me so? Why are you so pitiless?"

"I said before it was your own fault. I came over to offer you hand, heart, and an honest determination to win you a comfortable home. What did mademoiselle say? How did she put me off? Am I to blame that looking on at this admirable manoeuvred strategy I take a lesson home to myself? *Grand merci*! Evangeline, loveliest, I will profit by it."

The girl could not reply. She was strangely shaken from her usual mastery self-command.

When the pair went cantering down the highway Monsieur Pierre watched them out of sight with a cynical smile on his handsome mouth.

"Mademoiselle will manage to make an errand to Tanglewood, and to get a moment's *l'le-à-l'le* with her uncle. She will know all about my little *coup d'état* when she returns. I am not positive whether she will try entreaty and evasion or declare war. I can rally my forces to meet either charge, I fancy.

What a pity a beautiful woman cannot see our homage always falter, our love cools if she step from the pedestals of innocence and goodness. *Ma foi*! No matter what we are ourselves, we cannot admire a woman who stoops to wrong doing. When I came from Paris I thought I was dying of love for Evangeline Earle. But now that I have taken this ugly peep behind the mask, *parbleu*, I think there is no love at all. It is this lily, this charming lily in all its fragrance and purity, fresh as the dew-drop, fair as the morning, faithful and true as the sun in the heavens, it is for such a one a man can live out his life, never wearying of it."

When the equestrians returned Monsieur Pierre, who was sitting at Nannie's feet on the veranda reading aloud to her and to Mrs. Halstead, threw down the volume and went out to meet them.

"Welcome home, my friends. I fancy you found the ride unusually attractive, or that you met with some romantic adventure to detain you."

"Oh, no," replied frank-hearted Hal; "Evangeline

took a fancy to call at Tanglewood, and her uncle kept her some time out in the conservatory about a new plant."

"Oh, yes. I've heard about it. That rare and peculiarly tender plant which needs so much watching. I volunteered to help mademoiselle with it, but she refused my kind offer," said monsieur, gravely.

"I did not need you then. I don't like to trouble people with my vagaries if I can help it; but now I do I shall claim your promise. It will die unless your theory will help it."

She turned those soft dark eyes upon monsieur's face with a depth of passionate entreaty in their wistful glance which somewhat staggered his resolution.

"We will see what can be done," said he, reluctantly, and returned to the veranda.

CHAPTER XL

THE weeks went on swiftly; the hours slipped away as only the golden summer days can bear them.

Monsieur became a constant visitor, Evangeline Earle an abiding guest. It was tacitly admitted in the family that there was something in her uncle's house which was repulsive and disagreeable to her refined tastes, and Mrs. Halstead was only too willing to acquiesce in Hal's wish to keep her with them most of the time until her marriage.

The day had been fixed in the will of Mr. Allen to fall upon Hal's twenty-third birthday. It lacked only three months, and then the whole of the immense fortune was to become the wedding-gift of the young couple.

Evangeline Earle was impatient for the day. She did not disguise the fact from any of them. Her *trousseau* had been ordered, so there were no preparations to make. She counted over the weeks and days with feverish impatience. A magnificent country seat was nearly completed. She had already planned for a splendid *fête*, to be given as their introduction into fashionable society, and decided exactly what costume and jewels should adorn her beauty.

She had grown somewhat fitful, now extravagantly gay and brilliant, and again silent and abstracted to a painful degree. She had manoeuvred in vain to obtain a private interview with Monsieur Pierre, and almost as hopelessly tried to snatch a few brief words from him in reference to his secret position.

Monsieur Pierre, however, was not inclined to any explanation, and his adroit management angered and chafed her to such a degree that she could not always hide it even from Hal.

But apparently everything was fair and smooth before her, and all her efforts had met with eminent success.

Especially was this the case with Nannie, whose position had grown extremely trying. With quiet, unostentatious, but successful tact, Miss Earle had managed to take Nannie's place in the numberless little offices the latter had been so happy to render to her benefactress, and without Mrs. Halstead really being aware of the fact, her future daughter-in-law had slipped into favour with her, quite to the exclusion of her old favourite. It was very hard for Nannie, and many a secret tear was shed over the seeming coolness of her old friend, but she bore it as patiently as she could. It was harder still to bear Hal's remonstrances upon her unreasonable dislike for his *fiancée*.

Evangeline took every opportunity to misrepresent the poor girl's actions, and to wound and grieve and secretly insult her, and all was done so artfully and adroitly that neither Mrs. Halstead nor her son perceived it. One lynx eye detected every covert sneer on Evangeline's lips, and counted every hidden tear veiled from sight by Nannie's long brown eyelash.

But it was for Monsieur Pierre's interest that Nannie should be wearied and heartick and forlorn.

So would the refuge his extended arms meant to offer her be more promptly accepted. And so in silence he watched it all. And the days passed into weeks, and the weeks into months, and the wedding-day came nearer.

One day, in the garden—whither she had fled, after looking into Mrs. Halstead's room and finding Evangeline there caressingly dressing the former's hair—Hal came upon Nannie, and found her sitting on a low bench, her face hidden in her hands, her slender frame shaken by the sobs which burst from her in uncontrollable agitation.

"Nannie, Nannie, what has happened—what troubles you?" asked he, in sincere alarm.

Nannie tried to hide her fearful face, and faltered: "Don't ask me, Hal; leave me in quiet till I am calm enough."

"Is it anything new? Have you met with any trouble?"

"No, no, Hal," returned she, gaining strength and

calmness at the sight of his perplexity. "I think I am a little nervous, that is all. I have been thinking."

"Ah, yes," exclaimed Hal, impatient at what seemed such childish folly. "I understand now what it is, a foolish brooding over imaginary ailments, and shadowy sorrows. Evangeline has often attended to that unhappy trait in your character. It is too absurd, Nannie, to be making yourself miserable in this way for no worthy reason. And it is something beyond that; you spoil my happiness, you trouble my mother's peace of mind. It is so different from the sunny-faced, glad-hearted Nannie I used to love so dearly."

"And do not love now. Oh, Hal, is that imaginary grief?" cried Nannie, vehemently. "Once you were not so ready to blame me; once you weighed my arguments before condemning me; but everything is changed now—oh, for me, so cruelly changed."

"I do not see it," replied Hal, coldly, in the tone he would have used to a wilful child, hiding the tender yearning in his heart in order to administer the merited rebuke. "In what way has my change come? Most girls would have welcomed the addition to our circle of one so lovely, and talented, and brilliant as Evangeline. But with you it has been different. It pains me to say it, but really, Nannie, it looks as if you hated her for her superior gifts, were envious of her beauty and grace."

Nannie listened with both hands pressed tightly across her swelling breast—the indignant light flashing proudly over the wet eyes, and colour flushing up to her very temples.

"Go on, Hal," she said, in a suffocated voice. "I can bear it; speak your mind freely, let me know just what you think."

"I don't want to pain you, Nannie darling; but I do long to cure you of this strange disposition. I love you so dearly that I cannot be happy while you are thus in trouble. I wish I could show you the folly and uselessness of this aversion to Evangeline Earle."

Nannie smiled bitterly at the name, and then looked up in his face wistfully.

"You love her, Hal? You love her very dearly—not for her beauty, not for her position, nor because she is Evangeline Earle, to whom the will binds you—but for herself?"

She asked this with a wild, beseeching glance. Hal coloured beneath it.

"That is a strange question, Nannie, when you know how soon we are to be married. I love her? Of course I love her."

There was a shadowy sigh which came from the very depths of poor Nannie's heart.

"I wish you were married. Perhaps then your mother would care for me again," she said, dreamily.

"She does care for you now, perverse child, and so do I. Can we not love you both?"

"I fear not," replied Nannie, shaking her head slowly. "But never mind, perhaps it is better as it is. Some time, perhaps, you may think of this conversation, and not blame me so much. A very long time from this, but some time—some time."

Hal took her two hands in his, and looked steadily into her eyes, colouring deeply while he did so, and spoke, hastily:

"Nannie, when I see you in this way you move me strangely. I love you dearly. Sometimes when I think I am all alone with you in this way, free from other influences, that I have been harsh and unkind. I ask you to forgive me now, and to remember that I only mean it for your good. You shall always be my precious sister; but you know very well it is Evangeline Earle who must be my wife."

And having made this little speech honest Hal marched away out of sight.

"He has given me a kind reproof for loving him unsought with more than a sister's affection," moaned poor Nannie, hiding her burning cheeks with both hands.

Monsieur Pierre found her sitting thus with listlessly folded arms and drooping head like a blighted lily prostrated by an untimely storm. He had met Hal, still with traces of agitation in his face, coming from this path, and now his quick, active mind guessed something of what had passed.

He had watched her closely, weighed carefully every look and tone, and been guardedly circumspect of his own, determined not to lose a single advantage by a false step or a too sudden declaration.

The moment he saw her he knew that the hour for him had come. His handsome face wore a look of the most deferential respect, his fine eyes shone with earnest zeal, his musical voice thrilled deep with tenderness as he advanced to her side.

"Miss Nannie, alone and sad. What can I do for you?"

Nannie withdrew her hands, and looked at him kindly.

"Thank you, Monsieur Pierre," she said, "it is nothing that you can relieve."

"But you admit there is a trouble, a grief. Ah, it's cruel for one so young, so fair, so tender. There must be a help. I have a will that conquers everything. Let me find relief for you."

The contrast between this fervent speech and that last one of Hal's was overpowering; Nannie's blue eyes ran over again with tears of bitterness.

Monsieur fell upon his knee, and seized her hand.

"Miss Nannie—beautiful, beloved. I cannot bear your tears unless you let me wipe them away—unless you shed them on my breast!"

He paused to note the startled glance burn off the tears from the sweet blue eyes, to be charmed by the kindling blushes, and then went on, more brokenly:

"Do not look so frightened! Oh, Miss Nannie, the very ground you tread upon is sacred to me. You have seen it, surely you have marked my devotion! Can I ask you? Ah! it makes me tremble to think of the bliss or the anguish which must be my portion when you give your answer! Miss Nannie, if you will give me your angel guidance I will try to be worthy of you! Will you become my wife?"

Nannie had withdrawn her hand and was looking into his face with a confused blending of pain, astonishment and pardonable gratification.

"Monsieur Pierre," she began, "I am confused—I am frightened. I cannot think."

"Tender heart, I understand. You shall not be vexed or disturbed. I will not ask you to speak. Just hear what I have to say, and then I will go away and leave you one half-hour—an hour, a day if you wish, and you shall think about it. Ah, the bliss—the rapture for me if you consent. Mademoiselle, my heart is yours. I ask you to be my wife, and make my life happy. I am not rich nor am I poor. I have always managed to live and to gratify my somewhat luxurious taste. But I grant that I am indolent. There has been no incentive to exertion. But now, ah, you shall never want for anything. Mademoiselle, pardon me. You are not happy here. I have seen, without the power to assist, how the proud, imperious lady in yonder queens it over you, how she wounds you, how she delights in torturing you. Oh, Mademoiselle Nannie, give me the right to resent it—to take you away."

Nannie looked down upon this elegant, fascinating gentleman, kneeling at her feet, with a crowd of contending emotions.

Here was an opportunity to revenge her insults, soothe her aching heart, obtain a loving friend, a happy home, and, above all, to prove to Hal that the love he pined but would not accept was gladly sued for by another.

Monsieur Pierre, through his drooping lids, read every change of the ingenuous countenance.

"Mademoiselle Nannie," he said, softly, "you do not speak. Dare I hope?"

"I cannot give you an answer yet, Monsieur Pierre, though I thank you for your honourable proposal. I am confused and dizzy. You know that I am a poor orphan, friendless, portionless?"

"I know you are as pure as the angels, lovelier than the flowers, as high above other women as the stars above the feeble torches men kindle in this lower atmosphere. More than this I ask not," replied monsieur, enthusiastically.

"I have no relations to whom I can look for help or assistance," pursued Nannie, steadily. "You have heard that the only clue I had was lost?"

"We will find it again," said monsieur, eagerly.

"No, that will not be; until I die I shall remain just as obscure and unknown," she said, in a tone of deep emotion which startled monsieur.

"No matter," said he, promptly. "If that be all make me happy now!"

She sat with drooping head, and not satisfied with that she put both her hands over her face while she said, in a low and suffocated voice:

"More than that, monsieur. If I come to you as a wife it must only be after earnest struggles, after I have cast forth the unrequited affections I have given to another."

"The immaculate, honourable little saint," mentally ejaculated Monsieur Pierre; "what a jewel of a wife she would make, so conscientious at such a moment as this."

He replied, in a deep, tender tone:

"Even then your calm affection will be more precious than the most passionate fervour of any other. Nannie dearest, I still ask for your answer."

"Not to-night, to-morrow; give me time for reflection," she said, beseechingly.

He bowed as respectfully as to a princess, touched his lips to her hand, and went away.

Nannie sat there with a white face and a dull, fearful eye for more than an hour, and then crept away up to her own chamber.

Monsieur Pierre meanwhile strolled around the place until he discovered Hal, to whom he advanced with a winning frankness.

"I have a word to say to you, my friend, that is honourably due to you. I have just made a proposal of marriage to your friend Miss Nannie O'Brien. I have your approval?"

"You wish to marry Nannie!" exclaimed Hal, in utter astonishment.

"You have no objection, I suppose," began monsieur, with one of his dazzling smiles.

Hal stammered:

"Certainly not, if Nannie herself consent. But I am taken by surprise. I did not think—you say that you have spoken to her?"

"I have; and, although I could not say it to anyone else, to you I admit that she gave me strong hopes of its being a favourable answer, which I may receive to-morrow."

"We shall miss her very much. There is not one girl in a thousand like her," continued Hal, in a rueful tone. "I am afraid my mother will miss her sadly!"

"I imagined both yourself and Mrs. Halstead would find ample consolation in the society of Mademoiselle Earle," he said, in a slightly satirical tone.

Upon which Hal coughed, and looked as he felt, as if somehow caught in a discrepancy.

He left monsieur smoking, with a most placid countenance, and hunted up his mother, who was still under Evangeline's hands, sitting for experiments in hair-dressing and cap-making.

"Well," said Hal, bursting into the room in rather a brusque fashion, "I've a piece of news for you now. Monsieur L'Estrange is going to marry Nannie."

The ivory comb fell from Evangeline Earle's fingers with a sudden crash. But mother and son were both too eager and excited to notice the significance of the accident.

"Is it possible?" ejaculated Mrs. Halstead, "and Nannie has never hinted such a thing. I do not know whether I am glad or sorry, Hal."

"I think I am decidedly grieved, though I don't understand why. But it will be a sore miss to come home to you and find no welcoming smile from Nannie. He will carry her away to France, I suppose. I must make inquiries into his character—his standing. I wonder why he should be in such haste. He said they must be married as soon as we, though I hinted that I could give her a more generous fitting out after I had entered into possession of the whole property. Evangeline, dearest, what do you think of this sudden affair?"

Evangeline had gone to the window, and was leaning out to get the fresh air; a suffocating feeling had seized her. Her blood seemed stagnating, turning to ice. She felt herself like one hanging over a dizzy precipice by just the frailest kind of rope. And mingling with her horror and terror was a fierce unseen rage and jealousy.

She heard Hal's words, and knew that she must reply. Making one nightmare effort, she turned her face still farther from his observation, and said:

"Indeed, I am no competent judge. From what I have seen of Miss O'Brien I cannot say that I shall find it any serious loss though her society be entirely denied me. She has been sulky, resentful, and unreasonable towards me, from some implacable resentment which I have despaired of conciliating."

The tone was unnaturally hoarse, and had a spiteful emphasis. Neither Hal nor his mother could be unconscious of it. For the first time the thought occurred to Hal that there had been prejudice on Evangeline's side as well as upon Nannie's. His thoughts towards the latter were unusually sweet and tender. The idea of loving her had brought vividly to his remembrance all she had been to him since first the newspaper boy brought home the bag of cakes for the curly-headed pet of the tenant house.

Perhaps the secret consciousness of having been rather harsh to her of late aided this.

"I am afraid you are unkind to Nannie," said he, reproachfully. "Remember that she has a great many trials. That one in her circumstances is likely to be extremely sensitive. It was a serious disappointment—that mysterious loss of her mother's papers. I wonder she bore it as well as she did."

Evangeline had lost all control over herself. She turned her colourless face upon Hal, with hatefully flashing eyes, as she said:

"I beg your pardon. I will only look upon her in future as a saint, a paragon. I only wonder that you have been able to resist her wonderful loveliness, that you do not marry her yourself instead of giving her to Pierre L'Estrange."

With these words she swept away out of the room. Hal and his mother remained a moment in uncomfortable silence, not daring to look each other in the face.

Presently the latter said, in a consoling voice:

"All girls are subject to momentary pique, Hal. She was a little jealous of your interest in Nannie. It is a very troublesome circumstance, but I have concluded, some time ago, it was entirely hopeless to think of overcoming their mutual dislike. It is one of those things which we cannot remove, but must make the best of. I have been myself extremely vexed at Nannie's silence or cold acquiescence when I have tried to arouse her to a sense of Evangeline's grace and amiability. I will go to Nannie now. I confess that I have scarcely had a single free conversation with her since our guests have been here, and our old easy confabs in this room are quite done away with. I have thought of it before; perhaps it has grieved her that Evangeline has so thoroughly taken her place."

She went out, and Hal sat down at the window wondering at the sudden dejection which had fallen upon him. A vague disquietude haunted him every time he thought of the fierce anger flashing in the magnificent dark eyes of his betrothed when she swept away from him. A keen pain came at each remembrance that monsieur might so soon claim the right to take Nannie away. He was thoroughly troubled and perplexed—most of all at the bewilderment of his own thoughts.

While he sat thus a light step crossed the threshold, unclosing noiselessly the half-opened door.

It was Evangeline Earle. Her face was still pale, and there was a red circle about her eyes; but her smile was deprecating, meek, and tender.

She came up to him, clasped those perfectly formed hands on his shoulders, and looked up into his face, wistfully.

"Hal," said she, in a low, sweet voice, "I am a spoiled child. I was wayward ever. I beg your pardon. Let us be married at once; and you shall teach me to be a good child. I will offer the pardon to Nannie, too; for your sake I will try to love her. Do you forgive me, *mon ami*?"

She was indescribably charming in such a mood. Her tenderness had a witching spell; the soft, dark eyes a subtle magnet power. Hal kissed the pleading lips, and was gay and happy again. And Evangeline took care that he should not lose the spell of her presence again that day.

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

MONT CENIS.—The works for piercing Mont Cenis have reached the limit of the bed of hard quartz which has been so difficult to penetrate. The workmen have now come upon softer ground, and hope to be able to bore 1,000 metres in the year.

NITRO-GLYCERINE.—An inquiring German has been trying nitro-glycerine internally, to ascertain whether it be poisonous. In large doses it caused death in animals, acting chiefly on the brain. The experimenter, getting accidentally more than he meant to, suffered severely from headache, giddiness, and partial loss of consciousness, but experienced no very alarming symptoms.

INDIUM.—Indium was first detected by Reich and Richter, but has been more fully investigated by Winkler. It is found in the zincblende of the Freiberg mines. It resembles lead in softness and fusibility, but in colour is white, resembling platinum in general appearance. It is not oxidized by the air, and burns at a red heat with a violet blue flame. Its spectrum is indigo blue.

A REMARKABLE DISCOVERY.—Mr. C. W. Siemens has demonstrated in a striking manner the convertibility of dynamic into electrical force. A bar of soft iron enveloped with copper wire, not transversely, but in the direction of its length, if inoculated in the slightest degree with magnetism, and then made to rotate rapidly, generates electricity to such a degree that wire is melted by the current, and effects are produced which have hitherto required the aid of an electro-magnet.

TUNNEL UNDER LAKE MICHIGAN.—A great tunnel excavated under Lake Michigan, for supplying Chicago with water, has been completed. It is nearly two miles long; is dug 80 ft. under the bed of the lake, beneath a stratum of clay; and was excavated without a single accident, the ground being first broken on March 17, 1864. Its capacity is 57,000,000 gallons of water daily. The cost of the excavation was about 46,000*l*. The necessary machinery for distributing the water through the city will be put in operation by next spring.

THE ISLAND OF ICTIS.—From the discovery of comparative recent tree-stems and roots in the sands surrounding St. Michael's Mount, Cornwall, oaks, hazels, and willows, it is concluded that this is the Island of Ictis, mentioned by Diodorus as formerly existing, into which the Britons carried tin. In the

time of Edward the Confessor the rock is described as being near the sea, and a storm mentioned in Saxon chronicles in the autumn of 1099 submerged a portion of the then forest land; and Thevenard, writing in 1800, speaks of "la submersion du terrain de la pointe ouest de l'Angleterre au commencement du IX. siècle."

SOFTENING WATER.

THE supply of water to large towns has often proved a vexed question, and one somewhat difficult of solution. How to provide for hundreds of thousands of human beings between twenty and thirty gallons per day each of a substance second only in requisition to food, and of equal importance as regards purity, seems alone to present insurmountable difficulties at the outset. Far greater difficulties, however, await the philanthropist who ventures upon the undertaking—difficulties individually impossible to overcome, and which require the combined effort of producer and receiver. The producer may provide an article as free as possible from impurities, but with the recipient rests the responsibility of preserving it pure at his own risk, and even, if necessary, of effecting farther purification.

The necessity of pure water in a sanitary point of view is indisputable; the resources at hand for obtaining it are limited, and the care evinced on the part of the consumer often so indifferent as to render it necessary that official measures should be instituted in this direction. This is a question, too, that is constantly growing upon us; every increase in population involves fresh responsibility and new supplies. Therefore, ere long we must inevitably find ourselves either stinted in quantity, or, proceeding in the same ratio as the quantity of water to its present impurities, content ourselves with much less wholesome water than we even enjoy at present. The water-consuming population of the metropolis may be computed at about 3,750,000. To provide water for drinking and domestic purposes for this number the various companies issue over 87,000,000 gallons per month through their mains. Of this only 44,900,000, or barely half, is supplied from other sources than the river; the remainder is dependant on the refuse and outpourings of numerous cities, towns, and hamlets, which is diluted with a sufficient quantity of hard water to cause it to flow thick and turbid.

There are two principal sources of impurity pervading water which cause it to be unwholesome, unfitting it for consumption as an article of diet, and rendering it inconvenient and its use extravagant for household or domestic purposes. These are, first, organic impurities, and, second, salts of certain metals producing hardness. Examples of each of these impurities are afforded by river water as regards organic impregnation, and spring or pump water as regards hardness. Dr. Clarke, of Aberdeen, some years ago patented a process, now well known, for rendering certain hard waters soft by the addition of lime. Since that time it has been found by experiment that in abstracting the hardness from the water by this process a greater part of the organic matter that may be in solution is at the same time precipitated with the hardness. The soluble carbonate of lime, being rendered insoluble, takes down, as it were in a network, the principal part of the organic matter, also in a state of solution. Certain salts present in water generally are rather beneficial, and therefore it is undesirable to abstract them in any purification; by this process all of such are undisturbed. Sulphate of lime, for instance, tends to harden the water when present, but as a preservative against lead it is invaluable. In other words, sulphate of lime and lead cannot exist together in the same solution, and therefore, taking into consideration the quantity of lead used in cisterns, pipes to water supplies generally, and the highly poisonous tendency of that metal when in solution to the least extent, the importance of the sulphate is apparent.

The soluble sulphates are perhaps the most important protectives against this dangerous element that can exist in water used for consumption. The water softened by this process, therefore, in addition to having all the advantages of rain water, possesses a greater degree of purity, and is not liable to become impregnated with lead. It follows then that this process is eminently suited for purifying water for domestic purposes, but hitherto many difficulties have stood in the way of its general application, and various schemes for accomplishing it have failed in practice. If water of 16 deg. of hardness could be rendered to about 5 deg. or 6 deg. at a moderate cost, it would prove invaluable to brewers, dyers, and manufacturers generally, not to speak of the economy in fuel and saving in plant it would effect wherever steam boilers were in requisition. In culinary and laundry operations, too, a great difference would be found as regards extracting essences, making soup or tea in the former, and saving soap and the unnecessary wear of clothes in the latter. Last, but not

least, it would be a more wholesome aliment, promoting digestion, and preventing many diseases arising from the presence of lime in water.

This desirable object of utilizing Dr. Clarke's process is proposed to be effected by an arrangement which has been patented by Mr. T. W. Tobin. The apparatus simply consists of a galvanized iron cylinder, about one foot in diameter, and three or four feet high, in which are chambers wherein prepared lime is placed. It may be fixed in any part of the premises, and requires no attention otherwise than placing a small quantity of the prepared lime in it about once a fortnight, or even less frequently. The cost of working is stated to amount to about one farthing per two thousand gallons. In operation the water enters the cylinder at one point, and quits it at another, after having passed through the deposit of lime. After passing through the apparatus the water appears to be as soft as rain water, and as clear as spring water, and purer by far than either. Such, in brief, is the description of an apparatus which has been a long-felt want, and which, if it realize the expectations of the inventor—to which we see no bar—will prove a great boon to manufacturers as well as to private families, and will farther be an important step in the direction of sanitary reform.

ONE HUNDRED cubic inches of dry air, under the ordinary atmospheric pressure of 50, in and at the temperature of 16 deg. Cent., weigh 31 grains. The same volume of carbonic acid gas, under the same circumstances, weighs 47.25 grains; 100 cubic inches of hydrogen weighing 2.114 grains.

ACCORDING to Molesworth the shrinkage of various kinds of castings may be taken as follows: Locomotive cylinders, 1-16 in. in a foot; in pipes, 1-8 in. in a foot; girders, beams, &c., 1-8 in. in 15 inches; engine beams and connecting rods, 1-8 in. in 16 inches; large cylinders, say 70 in. diameter, 10 ft. stroke, the contraction of diameter 3-8 in. at top, and 1/4 in. at bottom, contraction of same in length, 1-8 in. in 16 inches. Shrinkage in thin brass, 1-8 in. in 9 inches; thick brass, 1-8 in. in 10 inches; zinc, 5-16 in. in a foot; lead, 5-16 in. in a foot; copper, 3-16 in. in a foot; bismuth, 5-32 in. in a foot; tin, 1/4 in. in a foot.

STATISTICS.

THE number of train miles run on the Chatham and Dover since last June is 1,024,802 1/2, which gives, with shunting and other short distances, a total of 1,268,832 1/2 locomotive miles. The fuel consumed for this distance amounted to 377,373 cwt. of coal, and 4,319 cwt. of coke.

It appears by a return recently issued that in the year 1866 the Bank of England purchased 10,093,003*l*. worth of gold bullion, and sold 2,872,439*l*. worth. In the same period the excess of payments to the public in British gold coin amounted to 4,385,264*l*, and the excess of receipts 2,473,080*l*. Gold coin to the amount of 5,075,654*l*. was received from the Mint.

OUR FOOD IMPORTATIONS.—Messrs. Sturge, in a recent trade circular, call attention to the extent to which we are becoming dependant on foreign countries for food both for man and beast. The average annual importation of grain during successive periods of six years each is thus given:

1831 to 1836	was	1,052,977	qrs. per annum.
1837 " 1842	"	3,132,059	" "
1843 " 1848	"	5,181,333	" "
1849 " 1854	"	9,189,437	" "
1855 " 1860	"	10,279,984	" "
1861 " 1866	"	15,485,160	" "

The late Richard Cobden anticipated that within ten years from the reduction of the duty on corn to 1*s*. per quarter the annual import would amount to 10,000,000 quarters. This, it will be seen, has already been exceeded by nearly 50 per cent. What the result may be at the end of another thirty or forty years it is difficult to foresee, as even now the consumption of animal food in Great Britain is so great that the quantity of bread used per head is more than one-third less than in France. Since it is estimated that 10 acres of pasture do not produce so much human food as 1 acre of corn, or even a less extent of potatoes, this increased consumption of meat requires that the produce of a much larger portion of the earth's surface shall be devoted to the supply of food for this nation.

CURIOUS HERALDIC INCIDENCE.—In olden times heralds and pursuivants were created in Scotland as addressees of honour and nobility to certain peerages such as "Albany," "Ross," and "Ormond," and in 1600 these titles were united in Prince Charles, who was Earl of Ross, Marquis of Ormond, and Duke of Albany.



[DESIGN FOR THE NEW LAW COURTS.—BY MR. E. M. BARRY, A.R.A.]

COMPETITIVE DESIGNS FOR THE NEW LAW COURTS.

"A THING of beauty is a joy for ever," is an old saying and a true one, which we hope will be applicable to the new Law Courts about to be erected between the Strand and Lincoln's Inn Fields; and, judging from the general excellence of the designs submitted, we have little doubt that the new structure will be an ornament to this great city, and a building of which every class will be proud. The necessity for such a structure has been so clearly shown, and so often commented upon of late, that any remarks upon that point here would be superfluous. We purpose then giving a slight *résumé* of the principal designs.

No less than eleven plans have been suggested, all more or less creditable to their projectors, and yet all are in some part defective. The entire structure is intended to cover nearly eight acres of ground, thus some idea may easily be formed of the colossal nature of the enterprise, and the great difficulties to be surmounted by the architect. Not only must it be handsome and massive in form, but it is even of more importance that it be thoroughly adapted to the requirements of law business.

A thorough combination of art and utility in such a building is an exceedingly difficult task, even to great architects, and one which none of the designs we have seen have completely overcome; yet by taking the best it will be possible, by modifying some features, and adding others, to erect a structure which will be a model to the world.

All the exhibitors have chosen the Gothic style, for the reason that it will better harmonize with the surrounding buildings than any other, and is more intimately connected with our law than any of the classical styles—Gothic architecture and English law having, as it were, grown together. Again, the Gothic is the most suitable, as it is, as it were, more elastic and more capable of being modified and adapted in the many ways which so complicated a structure may require. Notwithstanding these advantages which this style—so often eulogized by Ruskin—undoubtedly possesses, some of the competitors have selected too early a type of the style—for instance, the designs of Messrs. Siddon, Abrahams, and Burges are very faulty. The enormous tower introduced into his building by Mr. Siddon is chiefly attractive from its hugeness. The Grand Suitors'

Hall is certainly an excellent idea, but upon the whole his building lacks unity and compactness.

Mr. Abrahams's design strongly reminds one of a mediæval French *chateau*, and although excellent in many respects is decidedly not sufficiently perfect to bear off the palm.

Mr. Burges has erected a model of a feudal fortress which might, if looked upon as a relic of the Conqueror's days, find considerable favour, but is, we think, hardly fit for the purpose for which he intended it. Mr. Gilbert Scott's design, in Mediæval Gothic, is far preferable, but is slightly flat. The interior is very grand, especially the domed hall, but the exterior is wanting in dignity and impressiveness; even the central mass, which is finely ornamented and well proportioned, does not impress one with an idea of massiveness or solemnity.

Mr. Deane's design is picturesque and pretty, consisting of a group of lightly scattered buildings, but conveys to the mind of the spectator no idea of the real purpose of the building.

Mr. Street's model is very excellent, but is too severe in its treatment, and the style appears to be inadequate to the amount of expansion requisite in so large an undertaking.

The chief features in Mr. Waterhouse's design are the towers, of which there are five, one being a clock-tower. This gentleman has provided plenty of light—certainly a great advantage—and his inclined plane for the use of the judges is an admirable contrivance.

A quadrangular building, with a lofty central spire, is proposed by Mr. Lockwood; and an excellent design he has made. His central hall is very fine, and the masses are disposed with great harmony. The ornamentation is, perhaps, too profuse, but it is all in good taste.

Mr. Brandon has gone to work in a most elaborate manner, but has produced an ecclesiastical structure; and Mr. Garling's model is a most excellent one, and certainly conveys to the mind of a stranger, in every respect, the idea of a Palace of Justice, but there is a monotony about it which is hardly made up for by the largeness and grandness of the structure; but it is certainly the best of those mentioned.

We now come to Mr. E. Barry's model, a front view of which is shown in our illustration, and without doubt it will make a magnificent building. Like all his brother architects Mr. Barry has chosen the Gothic style for his edifice, but he has greatly modified it to suit all the purposes requisite in a pile

of Law Courts, and added to the elegance and grandeur of his structure by furnishing the centre mass with a dome. The arrangement of the interior also appears to be excellent, although probably many alterations will be found necessary.

The architect has excluded all the Courts from the Strand, and has placed them in the central mass of the building. Provision for the Wills belonging to the Probate department is made in the raised portion forming the base of the dome which surmounts the Central Hall. The angle octagon turrets contain staircases and lifts for this department. The four louvre turrets mark the staircases for the public, and the upper portions of the turrets are proposed to be used as ventilating shafts from the Courts. The side entrances in the centre of the wings are special entrances for the public only to their staircases leading to the public galleries in the Courts. The central entrance is reserved for the Bar, the professional public, and other persons whose business leads them to the Courts. New Temple Bar is on the right, in connection with the clock-tower; and in the front of the latter an open staircase gives access to the bridge from Fleet Street.

The open arches at each end of the front lead into the inner street, which separates the offices from the central building containing the Courts. This street is uncovered and open throughout, for the purpose of affording light and air to the interior of the building. Iron gates within the arches would secure its privacy, and its exclusive use by those frequenting the building. The side buildings at the extreme ends of the front contain the various offices, which are arranged on the outer side of the internal street, exactly opposite to the Courts with which they are connected. Bridges across the street give ready access from the offices to the Courts, and in all cases there is provided a private passage of communication for the judge. Thus, opposite to the Courts of Queen's Bench are placed the Queen's Bench Judges' Chambers, the Queen's Bench Master's Office, and the Associates' Office; and at the other side of the building each vice-chancellor has his court placed opposite to his chambers, with a bridge of connection, giving a central corridor for the public, and a separate passage for the vice-chancellor.

The central portion of the front contains the principal entrance (which might well be made more prominent), staircases, and the Bar accommodation, consisting of library, refreshment-rooms, robing-

rooms, and so on. Jurors and witnesses would not enter by the central entrance, but would pass through the inner street, in which at different places they would find special staircases leading to their destination."

THE MENDICANT.

CHAPTER I.

"WHAT a lovely morning!" exclaimed Louise De Brot as she threw open the casement overlooking the garden of the chateau—"see, sister, how bright the flowers appear; are they not beautiful?"

"Beautiful indeed," said Madaline, advancing and throwing her arm around the neck of the blooming Louise—"and the air too is so refreshing—I am sure I shall feel in much better spirits here than in the noisy capital."

"I am afraid," said Louise, "it will be very dull after the novelties of the place become familiar. You know, sister, I was never partial to country life, and I fear never shall be."

"And yet," said Madaline, smiling, "you seemed pleased at the thought of coming."

"And so I was. Think you I could have made Paris my home, and you and our dear mother spending the summer months here? No—believe me I could not."

"I did not suppose you could; but tell me, sister—the tear I saw stealing down your cheek when the spires of the city were fading in the distance, was it the offering of regret or joy?"

"Tears," said Louise, sighing, "flow often and we know not why; did I question you concerning all the tears you shed I should never want employment."

"'Tis that odious Thouron," said Louise, in a half-whisper; "he comes, I doubt not, to solicit our company for a morning ride."

As she concluded the door opened, and Francis Thouron was ushered into the presence of the ladies. After saluting each with a respectful bow he approached Madaline, and handing her a stem on which were two half-blown rose-buds, requested her to separate them.

"That would give me pain," said Madaline, gazing with earnestness on the flowers.

"How?" said Thouron, with surprise.

"To part them would detract from the beauty of both, and as they have grown together in strength and perfection let them remain so."

"Then wear them as they are."

"Nay, Louise shall wear them if you have no objections," said Madaline, handing the flowers to her sister; "none will prize them more highly than she."

"You are very considerate, sister," said Louise, taking the buds and placing them in her bosom; "I will keep them for your sake alone."

The colour rose in Thouron's face, and his lip curled with a scornful smile, but he was silent. At this moment the gardener approached the window, and making a profound bow, handed to each of the sisters a rich bouquet of many-coloured flowers.

"You labour early and late, Jean," said Madaline, after thanking him kindly.

"Yes, mademoiselle, I rise when the birds leave their nests, and retire when they seek them."

"A delightful occupation it must be," said Louise.

"None more so, mademoiselle. I am as happy as our good king in his palace, heaven preserve him. Sixty-eight years man and boy have I spent here, during which I have been but one day from my post. That was the day my young master, Louis De Crousillat, the sole possessor of this large estate, was found dead upon the highway."

"I have heard," said Madaline, "that the young noble De Crousillat was too fond of company."

"It is too true. A far different man from his gallant father, my lady, who followed Francis I. to Italy, and was killed in the battle of Pavia. Ah! he was a noble truly," continued Jean, encouraged by the smiles of Madaline, "a man without reproach."

"How long since De Crousillat's death?" said Louise, betraying by her look that she was interested in the story of the gardener.

"It is now six years," said Jean, leaning on his spade, "since he was found, on the highway, assassinated."

"Assassinated!" exclaimed the sisters simultaneously. "And was the perpetrator never discovered?"

"Never! A gentleman of fortune, it is true, now in possession of a large portion of the estate, was strongly suspected, yet—"

"The slave lies!" shouted Thouron, advancing, and casting down upon the gardener a glance of mingled scorn and contempt, "and nothing but his age saves him from the castigation he merits."

Madaline and Louise started back in amazement at this unexpected outbreak of passion. Jean quailed beneath the withering glance of the indignant Thouron. Recovering his composure, however, Thouron pleaded an engagement, and retired. Believing that farther conversation with the gardener would give him pain, the sisters bade him a good-morning, and withdrew to prepare for their accustomed ride.

At the time of which we write the throne of France was filled by Henry IV., a prince as wise and beneficent as ever swayed a monarch's sceptre. During his auspicious reign the last remnant of the feudal system was swept away, and the gloom which had for ages overshadowed France, in common with all Europe, vanished before the growing light of knowledge. Lands hitherto barren were brought into cultivation, and the whole country wore a smiling aspect. Henry, though "curable to a state of peace, was almost constantly at war with his nobles. They sought to re-establish the old feudal system, but finding the king determined in his opposition, they conspired against him.

The promptitude and courage of Henry, and the vigilance of Sully, foiled their ambitious designs. These were contributed indirectly to the general prosperity of the country. Many of the nobles becoming deeply involved were obliged to sell portions of their estate to the wealthy of the middling class. This, while it contributed to lessen the power of the grandees, gave strength and importance to the people.

CHAPTER II.

THE last rays of the declining sun were streaming through the chamber windows of the castellated residence of Thouron, dimly lighting up the dusky and mysterious apartment. In its centre stood a large oaken table, on which were scattered numerous sheets of manuscript, covered with characters of strange and fantastic shapes, while in a capacious arm-chair beside it reclined Thouron in deep thought, his right arm resting upon that of a chair, and the open hand pressed firmly against his high brow.

"Ha!" he exclaimed at last, rising from his seat, and pacing the floor hurriedly, "'suspicion rests upon a gentleman of fortune, now in possession of a portion of the estate! To be branded as a murderer, and that too in the presence of one whom I love above all things. Gold will not close the mouths of the servile. Something else must be tried. Yes—no! no more murders! To think too that Madaline loves another—shuns my society—rejects my proposals with scorn—she alone of woman kind before whom I ever deigned to bend the knee. Heaven! can I bear it and not murmur? But she shall be humbled, proud as she is, and when once in my power—she shall bend to me!"

As Thouron concluded he threw himself into the chair, and the deep sigh that escaped his bosom proved that the storm of passion which had stirred up the bitter waters of his soul was fast subsiding. For a few minutes a profound silence reigned throughout the chamber. The sable curtain of night, gemmed with myriads of stars, was now drawn around the earth. The owl and bat were upon the wing, and the nightingale cheered wood and valley with her song.

Aroused from his reverie by a sharp knocking at the door Thouron rose and drew back the bolt. A man bent with age, and bearing in his hand a lighted taper passed in. He was habited in a long black robe, which almost concealed the sandals upon his feet. On his breast was worked a large cross. His head was covered with a black silk cap, beneath which hung a few thin curls of snowy whiteness. "Good-night, father," said Thouron as he entered, extending his arm to support his aged visitor. "Your presence cheers me."

"Alas, my son," said the old man, feebly, "time is dimming fast the spark within me, and I can ill bear up against its ravages. The sepulchre awaits me, and I look forward to my dissolution with joy immeasurable. Yes, hail it as a relief from the cares and vexations of this life, and a prelude to a happier and a brighter world—a world beyond the stars."

He paused a moment and then continued:

"The great object of my life when the flush of manhood was on my brow, and the glow of health upon my cheek, was the attainment of knowledge. I lived, toiled, and would have died for it. I seldom slept, night and day were alike to me. I explored

the great book of nature for instruction. The blade of grass and the ripening grain taught me humility, and the painted flower warned me against judging by appearances. I looked out upon the vast expanse of ocean, and up to the boundless blue, and felt the infinite greatness of Him who governs all. I read the stars as a written volume. Thrice was I condemned to the stake, but I laughed at my persecutors, for I knew my own destiny."

And his eyes kindled as he spoke, but after a momentary pause he added, in a calmer tone:

"But I weary you, my son, and will retire for the night."

"Yet stay a moment, good father," said Thouron to the astrologer, for such indeed he was, "and tell me—may I wed the maiden?"

"Shadows, my son," said the old man, solemnly, "rest upon your path. Forget her and they vanish with the gloom of night."

And gathering his robe about him, the aged seer retired as noiselessly as he came.

The brow of Thouron darkened, and as the echoes of the astrologer's footsteps died away in the distance he gave full vent to his pent-up passion.

"Fool! fool that I am to listen to him. Shadows, ha! ha! and must I stop for shadows and such a prize before me? Forget her! But he never loved, I could as soon forget my own name, or the whisperings of ambition. No, no, she's mine or I perish!"

CHAPTER III.

THE chateau of Madame De Brot was situated on the north bank of the stately and winding Loire, and but a few hours' ride from the far-famed city of Orleans. It had been built under the direction of Colonel De Brot, and was considered, altogether, one of the first residences in the province. The brave colonel, however, did not live long after its completion.

He was killed in a duel just as the family was preparing to set out for the chateau, and this afflictive bereavement set aside, for a time, the intended journey. The colonel had now been dead two years, and the family had recovered their wonted vivacity of mind.

The situation of the chateau was indeed well calculated to cheer a sorrowing heart. It stood upon a small eminence, and was surrounded at all points by the beauties of nature. On the south flowed the majestic Loire, broad, deep, and silent; and on the north, east, and west, lay rich meadows, vineyards, and forests, beautifully intermingled—the whole forming a scene of enchanting loveliness. Madame De Brot, at the time of her husband's death, was about forty-two years of age, yet she scarcely looked past thirty-five. Her life had been all sunshine.

She had floated down the current of time without experiencing any of the vicissitudes which seem to be the lot of poor humanity. Madaline and Louise were her only children, and her affection for them knew no limit.

Louise, the younger, bore a greater resemblance to Madame than Madaline, both in person and disposition. She was all gaiety. When not talking she was either laughing or singing, and thus she was scarcely ever quiet. Madaline, on the contrary, was as remarkable for her staid demeanour and even temper of mind.

She was more like her father, being tall of stature, and her form graceful and full of majesty. Her face—but why attempt its description? To say that the features were of the Grecian mould—the mouth small—the nose perfect—the eyes dark and piercing—is what may be said of thousands who would not have borne the slightest comparison in point of real beauty with Madaline De Brot. There was an angel-like expression in her face, of which no words can convey even a faint idea.

No wonder then that Francis Thouron was smitten with her charms, and strove to win her by every artifice. But there was another who loved her—yes, loved her with a deep and an unfeigned devotion—an affection which knew no bounds, and which nothing earthly could exterminate.

CHAPTER IV.

THE moon had risen high in the heavens, and threw down its mellowing light upon the tranquil bosom of the Loire, as two cavaliers, attired in military costume and mounted on coal black steeds, rode up to the door of an inn. As no host appeared one of them impatiently drew his sword and struck it several hard

blows, which resounded through the house, and soon procured them admission.

"Your pardon, messieurs, for detaining you so long," said the sleepy host as he ushered in his guests, with an unusual deference, arising, no doubt, from their military dress. "It is not often Antoine Duval keeps two well-filled purses waiting at his door."

The hostess meanwhile had prepared a frugal repast, which they sat down to without ceremony. As Antoine entered Paul emptied the last bottle of wine.

"Come, brother, brother," said he, "wine, ho! and hark ye, Master Duval, let us have your best."

"That I will," said Antoine, rubbing his hands; "I keep the best wine, messieurs, in the country; no one ever complains of the wine at the Stag."

"The Stag," repeated Delanaire, thoughtfully, as Antoine left the apartment; "then we must be near the end of our journey, thank heaven!" Paul was too busily engaged to regard Delanaire, and he awaited in silence Antoine's return. "You keep the Stag?" said Delanaire as Duval entered, bearing the wine.

"My father did before me, and his father before him, if I have heard aright."

"The business, as well as the establishment, is hereditary then?" said Paul, pouring the contents of a bottle in a tankard.

"Just so; and a fine business it would be if the wars were over; but then, as you may say, messieurs, yours would not be worth a franc."

"Pray tell me," said Delanaire, not regarding the last observation of Antoine, "how far and in what direction is the chateau of Madame De Brot?"

"With pleasure—it is about a mile and a half distant, and lies in a direct southerly course. But you can satisfy yourself on these points by actual observation, if you will ascend with me to the balcony. You will then see it looking as beautiful as a dew-drop on a bed of roses."

"Lead on," said Delanaire, starting to his feet; "will you not go, Paul?"

"Oh! certainly," said Paul, moving from his seat with reluctance, and casting a look of regret at the remaining bottle of wine, "but I always like to finish one thing before I begin another."

"You may see it now," said Antoine as they walked out on the balcony, pointing with his finger in the direction in which it lay, "about midway between the forest and that black-looking building to the west."

"I see it," exclaimed Delanaire, a tear glistening in his eye as he spoke. For some minutes he continued to gaze on it with pleasing emotion.

"That dark building to the west," continued Antoine, after a few minutes' silence, "is the residence of Monsieur Thouron, the accepted suitor, so report says, of Madeline, Madame De Brot's beautiful daughter."

Delanaire's cheek grew pale, and his lip quivered. Paul noticed his agitation; "come, Henri," said he, seizing him by the arm, "you know we have another bottle of wine to finish before we retire; let us to it at once. In the morning we will enjoy a closer inspection of the chateau, and learn, I trust, that all is well."

"I cannot believe," said Delanaire, in a low voice, as they descended, "that Madeline has so soon forgotten me."

"Let not that trouble you," said Paul, soothingly; "women never forget the men on whom their warmest affections are centred. Besides, Madeline is too honourable to break her vow."

"She may believe me dead. I still, however, adhere to my original plan; that will be a sure way to test the truth or falsity of the report."

"You are serious then in playing the mendicant," said Paul.

"I am. The suit I have with me is the worn dress of a private—I am to be begging my way back to my native village—you know your part."

"Yes. And now for the wine. Shall I order more?" said Paul.

"No more for me," said Delanaire, following Antoine up the staircase.

Paul lingered for a moment, then seizing his cap, hurried after them.

CHAPTER V.

"You are too severe, girls, upon Monsieur Thouron," said Madame De Brot on the following morning as she and her daughters were seated at the window overlooking the Loire. "I think him, for my part, a very handsome man, and a suitable match for Madeline."

"In affairs of love," said Louise, interrupting her, "girls will have their own way."

"And often," added madame, "to their sorrow."

"Nay, dear mother," said Madeline, "would you have me sacrifice health and happiness to wealth and appearance? No, mother! I will never give my consent to wed, unless my heart approve the act."

"And permit me to say," said madame, "that in rejecting Thouron you do an unwise thing. Remember it is not often females in your station have such offers made them. A man of fine appearance and unbounded wealth is not to be met with every day."

"True, mother," said Louise, smiling; "I have found them to be a scarce commodity. Among our city beaux there were many charming as lovers, while the most of them would have made but indifferent husbands. They were such volatile and thoughtless beings—so regardless of the women."

"And pray, sister," said Madeline, "how long since you turned sentimentalist? I used to think you a match for any of them."

"Now, Madeline, did I not often reprove them in your presence?"

"Yes; but did you never read the fable of the hare reproving the jack for his timidity?"

"You are always ridiculing me," said Louise, "and I think it very ungenerous in you, indeed I do."

A servant now announced Monsieur Thouron, and Louise rose and left the apartment.

As Thouron entered Madame De Brot saluted him with a most gracious smile, while Madeline made a formal inclination of the head, but did not open her lips.

"How much better," said Thouron, after some general complimentary remarks, "to spend the summer here than amid the dust and dim of the capital. A blue sky—a green earth—an open sunshine and a balmy breeze, are not the only gifts of nature which contribute to make this an elysium. But why is mademoiselle so thoughtful to-day?" said he, turning to Madeline, "she is well, I hope?"

"Quite well," said Madeline, blushing.

"I have been pressing your suit," said Madame De Brot, rising from her seat and walking towards the door of the apartment, "with what success I leave Madeline to answer."

Madeline rose and would have followed her.

"Nay, dearest Madeline," said Thouron, seizing her by the hand, "hear me but for a moment—I love you above all else on earth—here on my knee I swear it! Cast me not off in disdain—reject not my petition, but say that you will be mine!"

"I cannot," said Madeline, trembling with fear; "I am betrothed to another."

"But your mother tells me Delanaire is dead."

"And if it were so, which I do not believe," said Madeline, recovering her composure, "I could never give my consent to wed you."

The brow of Thouron clouded, and the wild storm of passion gathering in his bosom was depicted in every lineament of his expressive face. "Madeline!" he exclaimed, seizing her by the arm with one hand, and drawing a dagger from his bosom with the other, "you go not hence till you promise to be mine. Speak it here! or this dagger shall find your heart!"

Madeline's cheek paled, and her eye became dim—fear unnerved her, and she swooned at his feet.

What might have ensued cannot be told, but at this instant a noise was heard in the hall, and a voice rising over all the tumult exclaimed:

"Which apartment did you say?"

The startled Thouron paused, and then hastily sheathed the dagger.

"Nay, I tell you I must see Madeline," shouted the voice outside again.

"And I tell you," said Madame De Brot, "she is engaged."

"I care not for that. See her I will," and with these words the door flew open and Paul De Brot rushed in. Perceiving the situation of the parties, he started back with amazement.

"Do you consider this proper conduct for a gentleman," said Thouron, folding his arms, "to break thus unceremoniously into an apartment previously occupied?"

"By what right do you propound that question?" said Paul, returning Thouron's angry frown.

"By the right of a gentleman."

"And by the right of a gentleman and a relative of the family I demand to know why I find Madeline in this situation?"

"I will reserve my explanation," said Thouron, scornfully, and retiring to the door, "for one whom I consider more worthy of my regard."

"Villain!" exclaimed Paul.

Then kneeling by the side of Madeline, he raised her in his arms, for she had fainted. The proper restoratives, however, were instantly applied, and Madeline soon exhibited signs of returning consciousness.

CHAPTER VI.

"Poor man," said Madame De Brot; "he deserves a pension. His story must be replete with interest."

"Suppose we have it from his own lips," said Madeline.

"Ha!" exclaimed Louise, "pretty, to bring in a beggar to tell his story. My word for it, he is an arrant impostor."

"Fie, sister!" said Madeline, with warmth. "I am ashamed of you. To talk thus of one who has been fighting the battles of your country."

"What say you, aunt?" said Paul, inquiringly.

"Madeline is right," answered Madame De Brot; "admit him."

Paul left the room, and returned in a few minutes accompanied by the mendicant, who kept his eye firmly on the floor, and as Madame De Brot handed him a chair thanked her in a voice tremulous with emotion.

"It is now six years," he began, "since I entered the army, and long, long years they have been to me. I see my native village now, just as I left it—its snow-white cottages—its church towering above, whose bell sent forth sweet music, and broke faintly on my ear when all was lost in the distance."

"And have you never heard from home?" said Madeline, kindly, little suspecting who it was she addressed.

"But once. A short time ago I met with a traveller, who informed me that my betrothed—she who had vowed to be mine—to love none other—was to be the wife of a wealthy landholder—and I, because of my poverty, was to be cast off." And as he spoke the mendicant bent his eye full on Madeline to discover the effect. She exhibited no other emotion, save that of sympathy.

"Did you ever hear of Captain Delanaire while in the army?" said Paul.

"Yes, monsieur. I served under him the last two years."

"Is it long since you saw him?" said Madeline, her cheek colouring as she spoke.

"Not long, mademoiselle. On the day my time expired the captain bid adieu to the army for a season, and I heard his destination was Paris."

"You are sure of that?" said Madeline, with solicitude.

"Quite sure, mademoiselle."

Madeline turned her eyes to heaven, and joy beamed in every feature of her countenance. Her lover beheld her with such rapture that he could scarcely maintain his disguise; but his confederate stepped in to his aid, by saying:

"As the night is fast approaching you had better remain where you are till morning, when you can renew your journey with fresh vigour."

"If 'tis the pleasure of madame," said the mendicant, humbly, "I shall be exceedingly thankful."

"Certainly," said Madame De Brot, "I will summon the servant at once, as I doubt not you require rest."

The servant soon appeared, and the mendicant left the room, followed by Paul.

"Ha! ha! ha! you played the mendicant well," said Paul after the servant had retired.

"You think then I was not recognized by any of the family?"

"I know it; why, your mother would not know you in your disguise. But do take off that odious wig, and those ugly-looking moustaches. There, now you are yourself again, and could madame see you she would be avenged for the trick you have played her."

"I have gained my point at last," said Delanaire; "Madeline loves me yet."

"No one but yourself ever doubted it."

"True, and now I feel how unjust were my suspicions. But to-morrow I throw off my disguise, and appear in a different character."

"And I shall leave you till then," said his gay companion, "lest my absence should be marked," and with these words he left the room.

CHAPTER VII.

It was near the hour of midnight, and a solemn stillness reigned around the chateau of Madame De Brot. Black clouds borne on the bosom of the west wind flew madly across the sky, and ever and anon veiled the midnight from the earth. The stars glimmered feebly through the thin mist which enveloped them, and the whole appearance of the heavens gave indications of an approaching tempest.

By the dim and uncertain light a boat might be seen

nearing the shore in the direction of the chateau. As soon as it touched the land two individuals, one of whom was masked, leaped out, while the other, seizing a small ladder with one hand and a light axe with the other, hurried after his companion, who seemed by his dress to be superior in rank. In leaping ashore, however, a dagger fell unperceived from the bosom of the follower. Hurrying on, he soon came up with the mask.

"I think," he said, in a half-whisper, "the storm is near at hand."

"Let it come," said the mask—"the sooner the better. And now, Marot, I charge you once more, at the peril of your life, to execute faithfully what I have commanded. Perform your task well, you know your reward."

By this time they were close to the chateau, when, without farther conversation, the ladder was placed against the garden wall and the mask ascended, followed by Marot. The ladder was then drawn up, and placed on the other side of the wall, and they both descended into the garden.

The mask led the way by a little turret of the castle, and ordered Marot to place the ladder against the chateau. The mask mounted, leaped into the chamber of Madaline. The next moment he appeared bearing in his arms the still sleeping girl, covered with the same cloak which he had worn. Marot received her and bore her to the earth.

"Who—what—where am I?" said Madaline, hurriedly starting, as if from a dream.

"Fear not," said the mask, approaching, and clasping her again in his arms, "fear not, it is your Henri; do you not know me?"

The terrified girl now awoke to a consciousness of her situation. Uttering a loud scream, she made an ineffectual effort to release herself.

"Fly!" said Marot, "fly; I see a light at the bottom of the garden."

"Tis the gardener," said the mask, quickening his pace; "the noise has alarmed him."

"Awake! awake!" shouted a voice at the door of the chateau, "awake! thieves! murderers!"

The noise awoke everyone within the chateau, and Delanaire among the first. Starting from his slumber and seizing his sword, he hurried down the staircase.

"Speak! what would you?" he exclaimed, opening the door hastily.

"Away! for heaven's sake! to the wall! they are bearing away my young mistress."

Delanaire heard no more. Bounding off in the direction pointed out by the gardener, he encountered Marot aiding the mask to carry the inanimate Madaline over the wall.

"Leave her to me, defend yourself," shouted the mask. Marot thrust his hand into his bosom for his dagger—it was not there.

"Villain! I have you now," exclaimed Delanaire as he drove the sword with a giant's strength through Marot's body. "Die, dog as you are."

The mask by this time was outside the garden, making for the river; but no sooner did Delanaire behold it than he cleared the wall with a single bound.

"Who are you?" said the mask as he came up with him. "Take this gold and let me off with the maiden."

"Slave!" exclaimed Delanaire, "I scorn you and your gold! Resign the maiden to me and you may depart."

"Never! Come on! if you claim to be her champion."

Paul and the gardener now appeared at some distance with torches, and hearing the clash of swords, hurried in the direction. As they approached the mask made a furious thrust at Delanaire, and wounded him slightly in the arm, and then, dropping his burden, he fled hurriedly towards the river. Delanaire rushed after him. The mask leaped into the boat and was soon out of the reach of his pursuer.

"The villain has escaped me," said Delanaire as the splash of the oar broke upon his ear. "One minute more and I should have done his work!"

"Or he would have done yours," said Paul, approaching. "But see—you bleed!"

"A mere scratch, I assure you," said he, forgetting everything else as Madame De Brot and Louise, accompanied by a few domestics, were seen approaching, just as the gardener had succeeded in restoring Madaline to consciousness.

"Behold your deliverer!" exclaimed Paul, confronting Madaline.

"No more a mendicant," said Delanaire, throwing himself at her feet. "Forgive me, dearest Madaline; 'tis the first time I ever sought to deceive you."

"Delanaire!" ejaculated Madaline, falling on his neck. "Oh! the bliss of this moment repays me for all I have suffered!"

The rumbling of thunder in the distance, and the pattering of rain on the withered leaves, warned the family that it was time to retire. Paul, madame and Louise led the way. Delanaire and Madaline followed—the domestics bringing up the rear.

On the following morning the sun rose warm and bright upon a scene of desolation. Uprooted pines, made branchless by the violence of the gale, were scattered along the banks of the river. Boats upturned floated with the current, along with the spars and rigging of many a wreck. Fathers mourned the loss of their children, and wives their husbands. A short distance below the chateau the body of a man floated ashore, whose face was concealed with a mask. On removing it the well-known features of Thouron were at once recognized. His countenance bore even in death a mingled expression of scorn and hate, and his hands were tightly clenched together.

It is hardly necessary to say that Delanaire and Madaline were united. The marriage was solemnized within the month, and the happy couple spent the remaining portion of summer at the chateau.

J. L. F.

GATHER UP THE FRAGMENTS.

"HERE it is almost dark and I have not finished the task that you gave me," exclaimed Mary Duncan as she entered the room where her mother was sitting, her countenance the very picture of despair. "I cannot see where the day has gone. I am sure I have worked hard all the time, and yet what have I accomplished?"

Mrs. Duncan laid down her sewing with a sigh. She felt the truth of the assertion, and could scarcely prevent upbraiding herself for this unhappy state of affairs. She was at the same time in a dilemma about a frock, that she had expected to finish before night. She had promised it to Susie to wear at a little party that evening. But now the approaching darkness warned her that it must be laid aside.

"There must be something radically wrong in our management," continued Mary. "Others accomplish the same, and a great deal more, and yet seem to work no harder than we do."

The last was said in a tone of complaint, for poor Mary had become quite discouraged. She had toiled patiently to assist her mother in her household duties, but could see no good results from her laborious toil.

"I know it, Mary; we all work hard, even down to poor Maggie, who toils from morning till night. I think we ought to have another domestic; but you know, the truth is we have a numerous family, and your father's income is not large, and we must not add to our expenses if it be avoidable. If we could employ a seamstress it would relieve us much, but we cannot afford it, so we must make the best of it."

"I know all you say is true," replied Mary, "and I would willingly work hard if I could only accomplish something, but when it does no good I am discouraged. There is Mrs. Vinton, she keeps only one servant and seldom employs a seamstress. Her family is larger than ours, and she has no assistance from the children, while I spend my whole time here. Everything in her house is in perfect order, and she absolutely has time to spare, reads a good deal, and even practises occasionally on the piano, that she may not lose her knowledge of music. Her children, too, are the first in their classes at school, as Jennie often says, and she helps them with their lessons every evening."

"Impossible!" interrupted Mrs. Duncan, "you must be mistaken. She cannot accomplish so much."

"She told me so herself the other day. Besides, they have a large and well-cultivated garden, a perfect contrast to ours, and Mr. Vinton takes the whole care of it, though his time is as much occupied as father's."

"I cannot think, for my part," replied Mrs. Duncan, "how some people manage to bring so much to pass. I never can tell where the day goes—night always comes before I accomplish my allotted task."

"I do not know how they manage it," said Mary, "but I wish we had their secret."

A light, tripping step was heard on the stairs, and the door opened and in bounded Susie.

"Oh, mother!" she exclaimed, her face all bright

with radiant smiles, "I am home at last. I thought I never should come. Our lessons were hard and the teacher kept us a whole hour after school to learn them. Where is my new dress?"

And she glanced longingly at the anticipated pleasure.

"Your minds are so much absorbed in Minnie Wilson's party that I daresay you could not fix on the lesson," replied Mrs. Duncan, indifferently. "I am very sorry that the dress is not done, but I have worked hard on it, till it is too late for me to see, and there is much to be done yet. The days are so short, and there are so many ways to turn, that it is dark before I can think of it."

The countenance of Susie fell, and she murmured something to herself about never having anything done.

"But you began it a week ago," she retorted, peevishly, "and, besides, you promised it to me. I told Kitty Lane and Bel Morse that I was going to have a new dress to wear at the party, and now I would rather stay at home than go without it," and she turned away to hide the falling tears.

"I am very sorry that the dress is not done," replied Mrs. Duncan, "but it cannot be helped. You can do as you like about attending the party."

Quietly laying aside her work, she descended to the kitchen to see if tea were in a state of preparation.

She found Maggie, the maid-of-all-work, flushed and excited, as she was vainly striving to poke a little heat out of the fire.

"It is no use trying to make it burn," she exclaimed. "The biscuits will be just good for nothing."

"Why, what is the matter with the stove? It has never troubled us before."

"But shure, the damper is broke, and the grate is cracked clean across. I have spoken to the master till I am tired to death, and it does no good."

"Well, you know Mr. Duncan is very busy, his time is so completely occupied that he cannot attend to it."

"It's aisy enough to find minutes if a body likes," muttered Maggie, pettishly. "The coal is out, and I reckon you'll be after seeing to it some time, or you'll be widout a fire. I picked up all the kindling to-night, and what will ye do in the morning?"

"Well, he must see to it, if that be the case," she replied as she opened the oven door to take a peep at the biscuits.

True, they did not present a very flattering appearance; the oven was almost cold, and the snowy croissants as soft as when placed there.

"You must get some wood to replenish the fire, or tea will not be ready when Mr. Duncan comes."

"An' sure, I don't know where to find it. I have got the last stick in the stove."

Mrs. Duncan looked blank.

"But we must have something," she exclaimed.

"There is an old barrel and a piece of board in the wood-house," Maggie replied, after a minute's pause. "Perhaps we can use them."

"Well, you may go and get them," replied Mrs. Duncan, slightly relieved.

Away went Maggie on her mission.

"How long she is gone," sighed Mrs. Duncan as she laid down the poker, after a fruitless attempt to rouse the dying embers. "I must go and see what is the matter."

She found her hammering away at a piece of board with might and main.

"Why, Maggie," she exclaimed, "why don't you take the hatchet?"

"Indade, m'sam, the axe was broke long ago; it flew off at the handle, before ever I could get it half cut. I have worked hard and only got these few pieces."

"Well, never mind, you may bring them in," replied Mrs. Duncan, consolingly. She could not find it in her heart to reproach her, for she did the best she could. She would excuse it, for she was constantly meeting with just such difficulties.

The biscuits still presented a rather doubtful aspect, when Mr. Duncan's well-known step was heard in the hall, and both mistress and maid knew that there must be no delay, for punctually at meals was with him a cardinal virtue. In a few moments, therefore, the family were seated at the table. The children, five in number, were intelligent and bright-looking, but they had, on the whole, rather a neglected appearance, for Mrs. Duncan had so many weighty tasks to perform she could never find time to attend to the smaller duties of life.

The father was a sensible, easy-tempered man, who seldom troubled himself about household affairs. He saw that some things went wrong, but confessed

that he did not wonder at it. There were so many things to be attended to in a family, and then the days, especially in winter, were really very short. If his meals were ready in time he made no comment on the domestic arrangements. This was altogether the wisest plan for him, as certain little duties that came under his peculiar province were sometimes neglected, therefore rebuke from him would have fallen with an ill grace.

Occasionally unpleasant views of buttonless shirts and unbuttoned hose would flit across his mind, in painful contrast to the perfect order in which his wardrobe had been kept by his faithful mother. But then he had become used to these things, and, besides, there was no one to blame. He could not afford to keep a seamstress in his family, and Mrs. Duncan, as everybody knew, was a hard-working woman, and did not willingly leave anything undone. It was all owing to want of time, and this is an evil which cannot be remedied.

The evening meal was less cheerful than usual. The biscuits were decidedly heavy. Mr. Duncan's relish for them was not perceptibly improved by being informed that the stove could not be expected to bake well until properly attended to. It was certainly unreasonable to expect him to attend to it, for he could scarcely find time for the transaction of more important business. True, it would take but five minutes to make it all right, but somehow the day always passed before he knew it. It was easier to talk of five minutes than to find them.

The countenance of Mary, the eldest hopeful, wore an expression of deep dejection. Little Susie hung down her head and refused to eat any supper, while Willie and Sammy had a fierce war of words about a little conflict with a school-mate.

Everybody seemed uncomfortable, and it was a relief to all when the repast was finished.

"Well, mother," exclaimed Mary as she entered the parlour "the day after the above conversation, 'I have found out Mrs. Vinton's secret, and I believe I have the key to the mystery we have been unable to solve.'"

"I am delighted," exclaimed Mrs. Duncan, already catching the contagion of Mary's bright smile and cheerful countenance. "I am glad if you can see even one bright spot in our desert life."

"I feel very happy to think of the discovery," replied Mary, "and I only wonder we had not thought of it before. It is so plain, and the remedy so simple."

"Well, Mary, what is it? I hope it will be as inspiring to me as it seems to be to you. I am sure I shall enter with great zeal into any arrangement that will put a better face upon the now sorrowful aspect of things."

"It is this," replied Mary, slowly, "to gather up the fragments."

"Gather up the fragments!" exclaimed Mrs. Duncan, in surprise. "I am sure that can have no reference to us, for I have always been especially watchful that nothing was ever lost or wasted."

"So I thought, mother, but there are a great many kinds of fragments. She does not mean particularly the crumbs that fall from the table, nor the fragmentary remains of clothing that she always cares for, although all of these are under her especial care and daily supervision. She arranges each day's task; superintends the affairs of the kitchen, dining-room, nursery and parlour. She gives out her orders, and they are promptly and faithfully performed."

"She must have a better girl than I have, or she would not always find the task completed, if the commands were given."

"I think not, mother. Mrs. Vinton says she has a very good girl now. But before she went there she had been discharged four times for unfaithfulness, and had the reputation of being very difficult to get along with. I think she made her what she is by her skillful management."

"She must have a remarkable felicity for working transformations, if that be the case."

"She has, undoubtedly, an unusual tact for accomplishing whatever she attempts. You would be surprised even more if you should carefully observe how systematically everything is arranged throughout the entire household. There is a place and a time for everything. No hurrying to and fro to accomplish neglected tasks, but a prompt dispatch of each at its proper time. I know she does not work half as hard as we do, and yet she accomplishes twice as much. The wonder of it all is how she can find time to attend to so much. She says that the secret lies in learning to gather up the fragments of time. The day is composed of hours, and the hours are made up of minutes, so if you take care of the minutes

the hours will take care of themselves. She told me, for instance, if she had ten minutes before breakfast, or fifteen minutes before dinner, she considered it ample time to accomplish a great deal. She always has her needle-work at hand, so that if she sits down for a few moments it can be produced at once. Her knitting-work she carries in her pocket, and if nothing else presents itself that is always ready. She said, 'I have been greatly astonished when I have seen whole pairs of stockings spring up out of minutes, that would be otherwise wholly unemployed. We have no idea how much we can accomplish with the odd moments, as they are sometimes called.' I mean to try her rule and see what I can do. I cannot expect to accomplish as much as she does, but I think we might perform much more than we do at present."

"It will do no harm to try," replied Mrs. Duncan, "but we can never achieve such wonders. It must be owing to some intuitive endowment of hers that she has such astounding success in every undertaking. But there is the supper bell, and we must leave our work for the present."

The group that assembled around the table seemed far more cheerful than last evening, a brighter gleam of sunshine beamed forth from every countenance. But the table seemed not to have forgotten the discomfort and uneasiness of the previous day. It reeled and trembled, and, after uttering most unusual groans beneath its ordinary weight of dishes, fell to the floor with a crash.

"Bless me!" exclaimed Mr. Duncan, startled out of his usual composure, "those screws have really given way at last. I have been intending to fix them for a month past, but the days are so short, and my time is so fully occupied, that it has been really impossible."

"I wish you could find a leisure moment to attend to little things about the house," remarked his wife, fretfully. "Everything is disorderly and neglected merely for want of time."

"A good time for you to begin to adopt the new motto, mother. I think it will have double force now," said Mary, laughingly, as she proceeded to gather up the fragments of broken dishes.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Duncan, sarcastically, "but this is only a first step in the long way to reform. We shall find it all an uphill course, and I doubt, if we do our best, whether we shall ever reach the summit."

Farther conversation was prevented by a loud ring of the door-bell, and Mrs. Duncan was somewhat alarmed by the ominous sound of a heavy trunk, as it was deposited on the piazza.

"Who can that be?" she exclaimed. "Not a visitor, I hope. I am sure I cannot find leisure to attend to my own family."

A bustle was heard in the hall, and the door was thrown open by the girl who had answered the ring of the bell, and a little elderly woman entered, whose quick steps and air of busy activity gave evidence that the vigour and freshness of youth were retained far into advancing years.

In spite of the discomposure of Mrs. Duncan's mind, and the unfavourable circumstances of her advent, she could not suppress a hearty welcome as she gazed upon their visitor, for she was one of those good, useful persons whose presence is always desirable in a family.

"My dear Aunt Mary! I am delighted to see you; and, indeed, you are almost the only person to whom I could say this with truth at this time. You will find everything in a state of confusion as usual. You know how it is in a large family, some things have to be neglected."

"No apologies are necessary to an old friend," replied the lady, with a benevolent smile. "I am glad you have a welcome for me, for I have come to claim your hospitality for a few weeks."

"For months if you desire it," and Mrs. Duncan was quite sincere in the expression of her feelings.

Since her marriage this good old lady had paid her several visits, and oftentimes it had happened when cares pressed heaviest, and she was ever welcomed as a gleam of sunshine in a rainy day. But years had elapsed since she had seen her, and she supposed that the increasing infirmities of age confined her to one place. But now she stood before her almost unchanged, with the same kind smile, and a step as firm as in her younger days.

Broken crockery, unfinished tasks, all vanished from her mind as she bustled about with busy hospitality to minister to the comfort of her guest.

And then came the evening hour, when the little ones were sleeping, and they could sit down and have such a pleasant chat about old times. Much was

said of bygone years, and then came the talk of present times.

"You must be very happy in your married life," said Aunt Mary, "with your kind, obliging husband, and promising children. They are great blessings."

"Very great," was the reply. "And these blessings are certainly mine; but I can scarcely say I am happy, for the want of time to attend to a thousand little duties is so very annoying that I often make myself miserable on this account. My husband's income is not large, and we keep but one servant, and I am called so many ways that I find it difficult to accomplish anything."

Aunt Mary mused in silence, and Mrs. Duncan continued:

"Mary and I have been talking about it for some time past, and she went to see Mrs. Vinton yesterday to ascertain her secret for accomplishing so much. She says it is simply to gather up the fragments of time. I do not really understand it, but I wish you could help me about it. I know you used to be famous for applying remedies to all maladies of the sort, and if you can teach me to be as smart as Mrs. Vinton the lesson will be invaluable."

"I will try my best," said the old lady, and her face lighted up with pleasure as she recalled the memory of Mrs. Vinton and Mrs. Duncan in their childhood, and she believed she had discovered the secret. "But why do we sit here, idling away our time? Our hands should be busy while our tongues fly so fast. Haven't you some stockings to mend? That is usually my evening's work."

"Yes, but you are fatigued after your journey, and it will be only a few moments before Mr. Duncan will be in. It is hardly worth while to produce our work at such a late hour."

"Gather up the fragments, my dear," said Aunt Mary, blandly; "a few moments will accomplish much that is useful in a family like yours. It is a good motto for old and young. A few crumbs wasted every day will soon amount to a great deal."

"So it will," she replied as the work-basket was produced.

And now the fingers worked swiftly, while the tongues were busy as ever. It was really astonishing how rapidly the pile diminished, and Mrs. Duncan warmly congratulated herself that they were not left till Saturday night, as was too often the case.

"Ten minutes before breakfast," exclaimed Aunt Mary as with quick, pattering steps she entered the dining-room; "time enough to accomplish a great deal. Come, my dear little Susie, bring your book to me, and read over your lesson, while I put a few stitches into this new apron I am making for you."

"And what shall I do?" asked Alice as Susie went in quest of her book.

"Get your slate and pencil and try that difficult sum that puzzled you so much last evening. You are fresh and bright now, and can do it much easier."

"Willie, my good boy," she continued, addressing the lad who sat idly drumming on the window-sill, "there will be ample time for you to feed your rabbits and doves if you wish."

"And then I shall have a longer time to play," he replied, quickly; and away he ran on his errand.

"Is there anything for me to do?" playfully said Mr. Duncan, who had stood an unobserved spectator of this scene.

"Certainly," she replied. "You will find a button on the mantel-shelf to be placed on the cellar door that you have long been wanting time to attend to. Five minutes will suffice. And here, Nellie," she said, addressing Mrs. Duncan, "you can transform this piece of flannel into a holder for Maggie's use. I heard her say she was in need of one."

And they laughingly obeyed.

"That is right," said Mr. Duncan, "you must make us all useful."

And when they assembled at the table there was a greater degree of happiness in the heart of each, for all felt that they had been useful in a small degree.

This was but a glimpse of the wonderful change wrought by the magical aid of Aunt Mary, in carrying out the sentiment of the new motto. The days seemed longer, each task seemed brighter. Mrs. Duncan no longer complains of want of time to perform her daily tasks, but she can command many leisure moments.

"You have certainly discovered the true secret of accomplishing many things, Aunt Mary," said Mr. Duncan as he came in one day; "and I am determined to adopt this motto as the watchword of my establishment: 'Gather up the Fragments of Time; for I think that is the chief thing wanted here. You must allow me to congratulate you on the happy suc-

cess of your undertaking. We shall feel under lasting obligation to you for this timely visit, and I hope it will be prolonged indefinitely."

"Certainly," rejoined Mrs. Duncan, "you must stay as long as possible. I never can express to you my thanks for all your kind suggestions. I never could have carried them out without your valuable aid."

Aunt Mary's visit was soon over, but its happy effects long remained. The secret of an orderly household had been discovered. Those few words operated like a talisman when duties were in danger of being neglected for want of time. It was not long ere father, mother, children and servants were united in the conviction that there was nothing like "gathering up the fragments."

R. A.

FACETIE.

MANY a culprit who doesn't want to hear one word from the judge hears a sentence.

WHY is a flirt like a hollow india-rubber ball? Because she is very empty, and has a great deal of bounce.

ONE OF HER "SWINE."

My sweet "sprig of geranium" has a fashion, when speaking of her beaux during their absence, of styling them "my swains."

Her pa heard her speak thus.

I went to see Jennie one evening, and was met at the door by the "old man."

After the customary, "How do you do?" and comment on the weather, he blurted out:

"I suppose you want to see Jennie?"

I nodded affirmatively.

He then called her; and from upstairs, over the balusters, in sweetest accents she replied:

"What do you want, pa?"

"Come down at once, daughter, here's one of your swine."

Imagine my sensations, amidst her ringing laughter, after the old boy's exit!

AN auctioneer announces in an advertisement that he has had so much business recently he has worn out two hammers, and is now on the second end of the third.

A SHARP-TALKING lady was reproved by her husband, who requested her to keep her tongue in her mouth. "My dear," responded the wife, "it is against the law to carry concealed weapons."

FOUND in an omnibus, by a gentleman who was seated with his back to the window, a severe cold. Anybody desirous of having the same can have it by going to the same place, and paying the usual fare.

"THE GOOD OLD TIMES."—The old times were not good times, at least for servants. The following deed is recorded in "Pepy's Diary" as rather commendable than otherwise: "December, 2, 1560. This morning, observing some things to be laid up not as they should be by my girl, I took a broom and basted her till she cried exceedingly."

A FRENCH paper tells a story of a soldier who, while serving under Peter the Great nearly one hundred and fifty years ago, was frozen in Siberia, and whose last expression was, "It is ex—." In the summer of 1860 some French savans found the frozen body, and gradually thawing it, actually restored animation, when the soldier concluded his sentence, with "ceedingly cold."

HOW PAT "CAME IT" OVER THE DOCTOR.—A few days since a neat little trick was played by Pat, of the Celtic persuasion, upon a doctor in this city. He lived in one of the suburban towns, and probably thought his *ruse* would succeed better in the city than at his home. He had a felon, and suffered excruciating pain. Two or three doctors saw it and advised that the sore be opened, but the sufferer held off; nor would he be persuaded by the neighbours, who advised the same. He bore the pain, but finally came to this city, where he called upon a skillful doctor to show his finger. He did so, and received at sight the same advice. He demurred, and protested that he did not want it done. The doctor had Pat's hand, supposing that the fellow was only a little shy of the knife, put it in and made the incision. Pat, whose head was turned, looked round, and with a face written all over with lines of disappointment, said, "Ah, doctor, have ye cut it? Devil of a bit did I want that did. I only wanted ye to look at it." "Well," said the doctor, "I am sorry, and as you did not want it done I shall not charge you anything." The observer might have seen a meaning twinkle in Pat's eye as he heard that, and a slight working of the muscles at the corners of the mouth, the subdued indications of a smile that he had been successful, and had had an operation free. Prelimi-

nary to this, however, was a swoon, into which he went as he saw the bloody ooze which followed the lancet, from which he was brought by a dose of whisky, a fluid which slipped over his tongue as though it was a well-worn path. Pat had accomplished his object—had an operation free of cost, and a "wee drap" thrown in gratis. It may be well to say, to point the joke, that Pat is well to do in the world, with a roof to shelter his head, and a good pile of lucre, which he has succeeded in accumulating.

A MORAL APPLICATION.

A young lady, whose scholars were about to separate for a long vacation, felt anxious to say something to them that might lead them to try and live good and useful lives. So she talked very earnestly to them about the future that was before them, telling them how much more valuable an upright, honourable character would be to them than wealth or fame.

When she thought she had deeply impressed them with the importance of the "good name," which Solomon says "is better than riches," she said:

"Now, boys, I want you to tell me what you most want to have when you grow to be men. Think a moment before you answer."

Up came several hands, and she called on the first boy for his choice.

"Whiskers!" shouted the boy, with such emphasis that it put an effectual stop to any farther questions.

SOMEONE has discovered the means of making haricot beans grow in six hours after planting. They grow to a fair height, developing leaves. The Emperor of the French has witnessed the experiment, and is much pleased with it. His Majesty must have a good deal of spare time and patience to watch six hours for the growth of a bean, for not to have watched all the time would have been not to have seen the experiment thoroughly and conclusively.

THERE is a model crèche at the Exhibition, to which the infants and children under three years old of any women employed within the building have a right of admittance. The crèche opened on the 1st ult., and babies desirous of a right of admission are requested to put down their names at their earliest convenience. This is a polite way of saying as soon as they can write. The book of signatures of babies under three must be curious. Male babies are, it is presumed, not permitted to smoke in the building.

GETTING UP THE STEAM.

In a certain Sabbath school the superintendent made a powerful appeal to the scholars to be active and useful, and among other things he told them they should all be locomotives, each taking along his train to heaven.

The next Sabbath, just as the school opened, in came one of the best and most zealous boys with thirteen new scholars behind him, and went up the aisle uttering a noise—choo, choo—imitative of the engines, to the amazement of the superintendent and scholars.

"What does this mean?" asked the astonished superintendent.

"Why," said the boy, "you said we must all be locomotives, and here I am with thirteen carriages behind me."

ONE OF THE THINGS THEY DON'T "MANAGE BETTER IN FRANCE"—A Great Exhibition.—*Punch*.

SOCIETY.

Mistress: "Well, Dickson, I suppose you all want a party this year, as usual?"

Maid: "Yes'm, we should like one, if you please. It's awkward accepting of invitations, if we don't send out none in return!"—*Punch*.

THE GOOD LADY FUEZZED.—Mrs. Malaprop cannot understand all this fuss about Household Suffrage and Vote by the Ballot. Having just parted with another servant-of-all-work—the fourth since Martinmas—she has her own ideas on the subject of Household Suffrage; but why anybody should wish to give votes for Members of Parliament to those young persons who dance at the theatres she cannot possibly imagine. She is shocked and horrified at the notion of Duel voting.—*Punch*.

EFFECTS OF THE EAST WIND.

Very terrible were the effects of the east wind last month. For scientific purposes we record a few of them.

Mr. Fawner was so angered by walking for an hour with the east wind in his face, that on calling on his aunt, from whom he had great expectations, he actually forgot himself so far as to kick her favourite lapdog—a kick as fatal to his hopes as that of the poor merchant who kicked down his basket of glass.

Mr. Smiler was enraged by the east wind to so

alarming an extent that he showed his loss of temper by passing a whole week without paying a compliment.

Mr. Honeymoon was so put out by the east wind that he sat down to dinner without having first kissed his bride.

Mr. Mealy-mouth was so affected by a walk in the east wind that he forgot himself so far as, in the presence of a lady, to speak of it as "heavily."

Mr. Sleek was paying court to the wealthy Miss Croesus, but his warm affection was so cooled by the east wind that she is always "not at home" now when he pays his visit.

Mr. Clapperton was so cut up by the east wind that in a moment of ill-temper he actually hissed at seeing some bad acting, a thing hardly in the recollection of the very oldest playgoer.—*Punch*.

NATURE AND ART.

Pedestrian: "That's an extraordinary-looking dog, my boy. What do you call him?"

Boy: "Fust of all he wer a greyhound, sir, an' 'is name was 'Fly,' an' then they cut 'is ears an' tail off, an' made a masti' dog on 'im, an' now 'is name's 'Lion'!"—*Punch*.

THAT'S ABOUT IT.—A friend, who has been a severe sufferer by joint-stock operations (limited), says that the "circulars" of many companies are nothing more nor less than a "round robbin"—*Fun*.

INGRATITUDE.

The ingratitude of the human race! Look here:

To be sold, a very superior invalid carriage. Cost, within six months, 12*l*. To be sold for four guineas.—Apply to, &c.

A carriage bought within six months for twelve pounds has, it seems, been unexpectedly laid up, and has become a confirmed invalid. Although, doubtless, it did good service, it is at once got rid of at an alarming sacrifice. Will no charitable person buy it, if only to send it to some hospital?—*Fun*.

PORTRAIT OF A GENTLEMAN!

Coachman (to Thomas): "Here, my master's dining with youn—just take him that note!"

Thomas: "There's a lot o' people here, and I don't know which is yer master."

Coachman: "Well, look here, you go into the room, and if you sees a gen'l'm'n there as looks as if everything he took did him good—why that's my master!"—*Fun*.

RECEIVED WITH OPEN ARMS.—The Great Eastern is to run between America and France during the Paris Exhibition. In order to show how highly the Emperor estimates the American, it is arranged that the latter shall be conveyed at once from the bosom of his family to the Brest of France.—*Fun*.

SCENES AT PORT-AU-PRINCE.—The names of the streets are very democratic—Rue du Peuple, Rue Républicaine. Ours is called Rue des Miracles, and certainly the people seen walking and riding in it are perfect miracles to a European. If one of them were introduced to an English stage he would be an absurd exaggeration. Now and then some gorgeous general of the Etat-Major passes, in a uniform bristling with medals, a light blue coat and faultless magenta trousers. Then comes an aide-de-camp on a nag about half the size of an English charger. His hat, perhaps a cocked one, or a *képi*, or a shako, is ornamented with an enormous plume to show it off. His trousers do not descend more than half-way below the knees, and his spurs are tied with a piece of cord to naked brown heels. The soldiers are the most tag-rag-and-bobtail men ever seen. No two of them seem to be dressed alike. Each uniform is, apparently, the worn-out property of some sixth-rate theatre. But the men themselves are often fine fellows, well made, very muscular, and if clothed in some sensible way would make a very good show.—*A Trip to the Tropics. By the Marquis of Lorne.*

JAOMEL.—Nothing has been done to light the town, even with oil-lamps. The only light to be had on a cloudy night comes from the open doors of the wooden houses. These looked comfortable enough; and the little shops seemed generally neatly kept. No glass was to be seen, for even one pane would occasion a sensation of heat and closeness in this climate. The only window covering is the folding wooden shutter, which is rarely closed. Every shanty looks thirsty for air; and, fortunately, in these islands there is generally a pleasant land or sea breeze, without which one would stifle. The least walking makes one long for a bath; and the long surf rolling on the beach in the clear moonlight looks so deliciously tempting that one would at once plunge in were it not for the sharks, of which, however, the negroes say one need not be much afraid except in deep water. Even then they do not

rise to gulp you down, unless they happen to be particularly hungry. They would rather take a snap at something that does not move and splash, as they are horrible cowards. A man told me the other day that, having waded out some way along a coral reef, with a black servant behind him, to fish, he had got on a jutting piece of coral, and was busy fishing, when he saw three large sharks near him, watching him intently, their heads all turned towards him, and their tails gently moving to keep themselves in position. As they were between him and the shore there was no avoiding them. He took the gaff the negro carried, and began at once to retreat; the sharks, as they got into deeper water, approaching uncomfortably close. As he waded back with his servant in dreadful alarm, the negro suddenly missed his footing, and fell with a splash into the deep water—a calamity by which his companion had no doubt the sharks would know how to profit; but what was his astonishment when he discovered that they had been so alarmed by the noise that they had considered it prudent to skedaddle!—*A Trip to the Tropics. By the Marquis of Lorne.*

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

TO RENDER STONE WALLS IMPERVIOUS TO MOISTURE.—Cover the wall with a strong solution of soap in cold water with a brush, taking care in the process not to produce a lather; then sprinkle the wall thus wet all over with a saturated solution of alum.

TO PREVENT IRON FROM RUSTING.—Heat the iron to a blue heat, and then, whilst hot, thoroughly smear it over with any animal grease, or fish or vegetable oil, when, on cooling, the iron will be found coated with a varnish which will effectually resist oxidation.

COVERINGS FOR THE ROOFS OF SHEDS AND OTHER SMALL BUILDINGS.—Paper prepared in the manner described as follows forms an excellent and durable covering for the roofs of buildings. The best kind of paper for the purpose in question is sheathing paper, such as is used under copper sheathing on ships' bottoms. The sizes of the paper in question are 30 inches by 24 inches for single sheets, weighing about $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. each, and 60 inches by 48 inches for double sheets, each weighing 1 lb. The first mentioned is, however, the most convenient size for covering the roofs of buildings. In the preparation each sheet of paper is covered on one side with hot coal tar, and whilst the tar is hot as much dry sea or clean-washed river sand, well dried in an oven, as will adhere to the tar is to be dredged or sifted over the tarred side of the paper. When the tar has become cold and set cover the sand with a thick coat of lime, slaked with a saturated solution of alum or soda, till of the consistence of thick cream, and it should have a portion of glue or other sizing matter in it. Let the sheet of paper, thus prepared, be laid on the roof, with the prepared side downwards, and nailed to the laths with fine, short, and very flat-headed copper nails, and so cover the entire roof with prepared sheets of paper, the edges of which must be laid as closely together as possible without overlapping. The upper side of the paper thus laid on must be thickly and evenly covered with hot coal tar, and another stratum of paper laid upon it; after which the outer side of this second stratum of paper must be prepared with coal tar and sand, in the same manner as the under side of the first. In laying on the second stratum of paper it must break all the joints of the first. To finish all, the whole outside must be covered with the lime-wash previously described, to which a slate, tile, or stone colour may be imparted by the addition of a little lamp-black, Venetian red, or umber. The above-described covering for roofs will be found very durable, quite impervious to rain, and perfectly safe from fire.

A DEATH'S-HEAD WATCH.—The most celebrated death's-head watch, once belonging to Mary Queen of Scots, that which the royal lady gave to Mary Seaton, her maid of honour, and which afterwards came into the possession of Sir Thomas Dick Lauder. It is of silver gilt. The forehead of the skull bears the symbols of death, the scythe and the hour-glass placed between a palace and a cottage, to show the impartiality of the grim destroyer; at the back of the skull is Time destroying all things, and at the top of the head are scenes of the Garden of Eden and the Crucifixion. The watch is opened by reversing the skull, placing the upper part of it in the hollow of the hand, and lifting the jaw by a hinge: this part being enriched by engraved representations of the Holy Family, angels, and shepherds with their flocks. The works of the watch form the brains of the skull, and are within a silver envelope, which acts as a

musically toned bell; while the dial-plate serves as the palate. This very curious work of art, which was made at Blois, is too large to be carried as a pocket watch.

EROTOPSIS.

I WANDERED once in a dreamy land—
In a land of opiate flowers—
In a shadowy land, where a soft breeze
fanned
All day the drowsy bowers:
I wandered there with a maiden fair,
Nor heeded the sliding hours.
For the spirit of love was in the air,
And all things owned its might;
The very breeze that sported there
Was languid with delight;
The skies all day had a loving glow,
And the stars glowed with love all night.
No noise there was in the dreamy place,
Save over the murmuring bees
Adown the dells, in those opiate bells,
Made slumbrous melodies;
While the birds above did prate of love
In the gently swaying trees:
And, like the creature of a dream,
For loveliness and grace,
Was the fair maid with whom I strayed
In this mysterious place;
For the light of her soul which did mine
control
Was mirrored in her face;
While the eye could see its harmony
In her calm, majestic pace.
We sometimes sat on a grassy knoll—
On a verdant slope, alone,
And I gazed on her face till my very soul
Seemed hers, and not my own;
And a rapture rose in my inmost soul
I never before had known.
I saw by her eyes, and I felt by her sighs,
That this sweet maid loved me,
With a passion as strong as mine for her
(If such a thing could be);
And we plighted a vow, that as we loved
now,
So love evermore would we.
A mighty town of antique renown
Gleamed far through the hazy air—
Shone dim through the dreamy air,
And voices soft spoke to me oft
Of honour and glory there;
But I still delayed with the radiant maid,
Nor had for aught else a care.
Now, whether this land was a dream or not,
It profits not to know;
But the sorrows those demon-tones foretold
Have come on me long ago;
And a gloom envelops the skies above,
And shrouds the earth below.
For the maiden I loved I behold no more;
But in dreams her spirit doth come,
And tells me tales of a beautiful land—
Of a land beyond the tomb—
Where love's bright day never fades away
'Neath the shade of a baleful doom.
Her sepulchre lies in a secret dell,
In an ancient cypress-grove;
And there at night, by the stars' pale light,
I talk with my spirit love:
And I pine for the hour my soul shall have
power
To soar to the realms above—
To those realms afar, in some sinless star,
Whose atmosphere is love.
My dream of love (if dream it were),
Shall there be acted o'er it,
Where no demon spirit shall e'er have
might
To part us as before—
Where we shall be from all sorrows free,
And love for evermore. W. L. S.

FARMERS ON EDUCATION.—The other day, in a Western county, an excellent clergyman had all his farmers to dinner, wishing to ascertain their views on the education of agricultural labourers. Many of the farmers were much above the average British farmer, men of some feeling, and even education. The clergyman asked them: "Well, now, ought the children of your labourers to go to school; and if so, what do you think they ought to learn?" The farmers all thought the children ought to go to school; they "saw no harm in that." "Should they learn reading?" "Yes, reading, but not more than is

necessary to read their bibles"—thus much in compliment to the clergyman, "not more," in order that the school might be cheap, and not bear heavily on their pockets. "Well—and writing?" "Well, yes, just enough writing to sign their names" (not enough to open any other field of labour to them). "Well—and arithmetic?" Emphatically "No" from all the farmers: "No use at all in arithmetic." Arithmetic might throw an unpleasant light on the rate of wages, and, besides, it is a wonderful sharpener of childish faculties.

GEMS.

WASTE nothing; neither money, time nor talent.
ALWAYS tell the truth; you will find it easier than lying.
RESOLVE to perform what you ought; perform what you resolve.
PROSPERITY is a blessing to the good, but a curse to the evil.
LET everything have its place, and every business its time.
BETTER to be upright with poverty than wicked with plenty.
WHATEVER you dislike in another take care to correct in yourself.
A MAN never forgets an insult to his pride or purse; a woman to her beauty or love.
EVERY man magnifies the injuries he has received and lessens those he has inflicted.
TIME never sits heavily upon us but when it is badly employed.
HEAR one side, and you will be in the dark; hear both sides, and all will be clear.
HE that will not look before him will have to look behind him—with regret.
A WORD once spoken, a coach with four horses cannot overtake it and bring it back.
QUIET is only to be obtained by settling upon that which will nourish without stint our inner life. Till we have that we shall perpetually wander from object to object, "seeking rest but finding none."

MISCELLANEOUS.

It may not be generally known that the pulpit and reading-desk in St. Pancras Church, in the Euston Road, are made out of the celebrated Fairlop Oak which gave its name to Fairlop Fair in Epping Forest, and which was blown down about fifty years ago.

AN Exhibition takes, as a rule, two years of a manufacturer's time to get up his goods and display them, and when these shows are at intervals of only five years between England and France the labour becomes incessant, and the cost almost too heavy to be borne.

THE ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE.—The Royal Naval Reserve numbers nearly 17,000 able seamen, who are maintained at an annual cost of 143,000*l*. The general opinion is that the system works admirably. We are indebted for it to the heads of the Admiralty under the late administration. This ought never to be forgotten when their good and evil doings are being warmly canvassed.

MOTHER-O'-PEARL PAPER.—The *Paper Trade Review* cautions the public against a beautiful paper bearing the name "Mother-o'-Pearl." It appears that the pearly appearance is communicated to the paper by the use of sugar of lead; and on analysis it has been found that a card measuring 5*½* by 3 inches contains no less than 7 grains of that poisonous substance.

NATIONAL EXHIBITION OF WORKS OF ART.—The Executive Committee of the National Exhibition of Works of Art, to be held at Leeds next year, have received an official notification that the Queen has been graciously pleased to become patron of this Exhibition, which it is hoped will rival, and perhaps surpass, the Art-Treasures Exhibition of Manchester held in 1857.

ACCOMMODATION IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.—We are asked, from as far off as Hayti, the number of members the English House of Commons will seat with comfort. We reply, on the best authority:

On the Floor..... 256
In the Galleries 108

364

The above calculation allows a seat of 24 in. wide to each member. A reduction of this allowance would, of course, give an increase in the number of members.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

THOMAS, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, and very fond of home.
A CONSTANT READER.—You are correct; rain does not fall in *Paris*. The dew, however, which arises in very heavy.
GROUCH.—The law of master and apprentice is not embodied in one statute; it is quite a mistake to suppose so.
BERTHA, eighteen, fair, blue eyes, brown hair, and good looking. Respondent must be from twenty to twenty-five.
A. R. T., twenty, 5 ft. 10 in., dark, very good tempered, a draper, with flourishing prospects, and very fond of music.
EVELINA B., seventeen, medium height, a brunette, dark eyes and hair, good looking, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must be fair and tall; *carrie* exchanged.
E. W. G., twenty-two, 5 ft. 3 in., fair, and blue eyes. Respondent must be well educated, about twenty, and have a business of his own.
A CONSTANT READER.—A French-English pronouncing dictionary would be useless, as the pronunciation of the two languages is not permutable.
HARRY W., eighteen, and 5 ft. 7 in. in height. Respondent must be dark and pretty, not more than seventeen, and about 5 ft. 4 in. height.
GERALDINE.—The name Saunders is of Scotch origin. (Handwriting not good, nor by any means above its show a capability of being improved by care and study.)
CLARA.—Mohair is a material for textile manufacture, consisting of the hair of a goat which inhabits the mountains of Angola, in Asia Minor. German *Mohr*, French *moiré*.
THOMAS B. desires a frugal, loving wife. Respondent must have a bank account of her own, and be of his age, between forty and fifty.
F. P. H. (Glamorgan).—It matters little whether on meeting a lady or gentleman friend you raise your hat with your right hand or left.
S. C., twenty-one, 5 ft. 5 in., dark hair, and brown eyes. Respondent must be dark, not under twenty-seven; a Roman Catholic preferred.
A CONSTANT READER.—The value of a Spanish dollar in English money is 4s. 2d., the gold pistole 15s. 11d., and the doubloon 30s. 10d.
JAMES, twenty-two, 5 ft. 6 in., dark, with very curly hair, whiskers, and moustache, and good looking. Respondent must be ready to love, honour, and obey.
A SUBSCRIBER FROM THE COMMERCIAL.—We doubt much whether a five-shilling piece of Charles II. (well marked), 1666, would fetch at a dealer's much more than its stamped value.
R. H. S. R.—The correct phrase is "Seldom or ever," as we have before informed you. The apparent contradiction to which you point was simply a printer's error.
LOUISA, seventeen, petite figure, dark brown hair, hazel eyes, domesticated, fond of home and music, and would make a home happy. Respondent must be steady, lively, and if fair preferred.
J. G. N.—"Silver weddings" were instituted in Germany many centuries ago. They are festivals held by married couples on attaining the twenty-fifth anniversary of their wedding-day; on the fiftieth it is a "golden wedding."
T. E. B., twenty-four, 5 ft. 9 in., fair, blue eyes, light brown hair and whiskers, a seaman, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must not be over twenty-one; dark complexion preferred.
A SUFFERER.—The disagreeable and almost painful sensation called "heartburn" may easily be alleviated by drinking a wineglassful of cold water, into which has been mixed a third of a teaspoonful of bicarbonate of soda.
ALBERT.—The terms and conditions upon which boys are received into the offices of attorneys vary according to circumstances, as various as each respective case. Apply to a respectable attorney.
CARILLA M., a blonde, eighteen, medium height, blue eyes, light hair, passionately fond of music, and has nothing to offer but a loving heart. Respondent must be a dark gentleman.
CHARLES.—Our National Debt has virtually arisen since the time of the revolution, for though it was customary for the earlier kings to borrow money upon emergencies, the revenues of the crown were pledged for the amount, which was usually repaid in a few years.
EDWARD TETTER, twenty, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, rather fair, handsome, very steady and fond of home, with an income of £600 a year. Respondent must be about seventeen, brown hair, and rather full brown eyes, with no property, as "E. T." prefers a portionless wife.
R. S. W. and J. S. S. of Yorkshire. "R. S. W." twenty-five, 5 ft. 8 in. in height, dark brown hair, whiskers and moustache, and is in a nice situation on a railway. "J. S. S." twenty-eight, 5 ft. 10 in., brown hair, whiskers and moustache, and good tempered.
JOSEPHINE.—You wish to know the purpose of *semi-frying* food; it is to have it done quickly, therefore to fry a whole fowl, or even half of one, would be useless, as it might be

dressed in a different way in less time. The only way to semi-fry a fowl with the object of having it quickly placed on the table, and to satisfy a fastidious taste, is to dress it in a similar way to that practised in Egypt—that is, dressed in oil. In France a dish is called "*Poulet à la Marseillaise*," it being stated that Napoleon I., after having gained that celebrated victory, ate three small chickens done in this way, and he approved of them so highly that he desired they might always be served in the same way during the campaign.
H. MORGAN asks us to give him our opinion of the *private* life of a clergyman, and what was the reason of the reverend gentleman leaving. Not to say absurd, how inconsistent to ask the first query! To the second perhaps the vestry or guardians of the reverend gentleman's parish might reply.
ADA LOUISA is made unhappy by a capricious lover, who is sometimes particularly attentive and affectionate while at others he is cool and indifferent. Poor "Louisa!" From this you may clearly understand that he is a fickle avain, who, like coquettes and flirts of the other sex, are contemptible as lovers, tyrants as husbands or wives.
OCTAVIUS, seventeen, 5 ft. 6 in., good looking, and with an income of £60 per annum. Respondent must be well educated, in possession of property, and between thirty and forty; a Jewess preferred, but "Octavius" is not particular as to any particular lady may have adopted if she only will make a good housewife.
LUCK.—The best way to make bottled lemonade is to dissolve 1 lb. of loaf sugar in 1 quart of water, and boil it over a slow fire, 2 drachms of acetic acid, 4 oz. of tartaric acid; when cold add two-pennyworth of essence of lemon; put one-sixth of the above into each bottle filled with water, and add 30 grains of carbonate of soda; cork it immediately, and it will be fit for use.
CONSOLATION.
Out of the shadow's deepest gloom
Love's sweetest violets oft will bloom,
And when the heart seems most forlorn,
From bitterest tears new smiles are born.
Hands that are wearying, day by day,
Clasping in vain their idols of clay,
Soon unto them long rest shall be given,
And for darkness on earth the daylight of heaven.
Though during the tempest the sunlight is gone,
The beautiful bow of the storm is born;
So when our life the darkest doth seem,
Heaven lights up our path with a glorious beam.
Let us think when our heart joys have left us alone,
That after the storm set then comes the sun;
We will weep when we must, but smile while we may,
And plant only flowers, not thorns, in our way.
J. H. F.
LOUISA W. and MARY S. "Louisa" is twenty-two, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes, very good looking, and domesticated. Respondent must be a dark young man, not under twenty-seven, and a tradesman preferred. "Mary," twenty-three, rather tall, dark hair, hazel eyes, fair, good tempered, and industrious. Respondent must be tall and fair; age or business not objected to.
JAMES.—The ceremony of locking up in the Tower is very curious. On Tuesdays, a little before eleven o'clock, and Fridays at twelve, the head warder (yeoman porter), clothed in a long red cloak, bearing in his hand a huge bunch of keys, and attended by a brother warden carrying a lantern, calls out, "*Escort Keys*," each sentry, as he passed his post, crying, "Who goes there?"—"Keys."
X. Y. Z.—Memories, like plants, require cultivation, and many a man with a so-called bad memory has by hard study quickly acquired a greater perfection in the art than others with whom it has been a natural gift. Read continually, and endeavour to throw your entire thoughts into the subject you are perusing, and make notes of the chief points. Do this for a short period, and you will soon possess a "good memory" and a fluent conversational power.
J. T. T.—1. and 2. See our answer to "John Line." 3. The department of Manchester being so great it is probable that examinations are passed in that city; we think it, however, most probable you would have to come to London. 4. Without doubt the Post Office authorities have the power of dismissing their own officers; if not, who should have when amongst so many thousands of *employees* it is necessary daily to dismiss great numbers?
MARY.—The way the shamrock is said to have become the emblem of Ireland is the following.—When St. Patrick was engaged in the conversion of the Irish he found it difficult to make them understand the meaning of the Trinity. To explain it more clearly he picked a sprig of shamrock and showed them that, although but one in itself, it was composed of three parts. The shamrock has ever since been the emblematic symbol of the Emerald Isle.
S. W. WRIGHT has an inclination for a few years at sea, and would like to join as a midshipman, if possible, on some respectable ship. The way to become a midshipman in the Merchant Service is to be articled to some shipping firm. You will find in the advertising columns of the *Shipping Gazette* and the *Times* any number of advertisements of Liverpool and London firms for midshipmen. The money required by owners of first-class ships as midshipmen is about 100*l.*, without the cost of the outfit.
WIDOW S.—In almost every large district town in the three kingdoms there are free boys' and girls' schools. There is a very large one, for instance, in Kennington Oval, near London, but their name is legion. Make application in writing to the master or mistress of the school, but generally speaking any clergyman will readily use his influence in favour of a respectable person. At St. Mark's College there is one of vast size and number of pupils, who pay is, each per week.
JOHN LEE.—The qualification for an appointment to a clerkship in the Savings' Bank Department of the Post Office consists of a sound English education, viz., reading, writing, and arithmetic, the latter being a *specialty*. In addition you must possess a knowledge of at least one other European language. The qualifications required are, in fact, precisely the same as those of the clerks from whom they are chosen. It requires, however, the influence of a Member of Parliament voting with the Government of the day to obtain a nomination; the commencing salary is not lower than 65*l.* per annum. In fact, with the exception of a

few of the choice departments—such, for instance, as the Secretary Department—none of the overworked servants of the Post Office are overpaid.
JULIA.—On no account encourage selfishness; it is a hateful spirit, especially in a woman. Has not God written upon the flowers that sweeten the air, upon the breeze that rocks the flowers upon their stems, upon the rainbow that refreshes the spring of moss that lifts its head in the desert, upon every shell that sleeps in the caverns of the deep, no less than upon the mighty sun which warms and cheers millions of creatures that live in its light? upon all He has written, "*Now live! for himself!*"
JANE.—You are correct in your judgment; the great art in frying fish is to have it free from grease, and in that state it is one of the most delicate descriptions of food that can be given to an invalid, and at the same time the most nourishing; the sudden immersion in the fat solidifies the albumen in the flesh of the fish, and renders it easy of digestion; the coating of bread-crumbs prevents the fat penetrating into the fish, and when eaten by the invalid the skin should be removed and only the white flesh partaken of.
W. G. (of Bristol).—Your business accomplishments and requirements are assuredly those most desirable in a "counting-house clerk." Your wages are not equivalent to those of the famed Dorsetshire labourers of our childhood's day, who made so much fuss in the world. But remember "Fortune helps those who help themselves." Advertise if you can afford it; write to principals of firms if you cannot; at all events, leave no stone unturned, and beneath one you will find luck; but what is called luck? Luck, like a fluke, is obtained easily; but it is, nevertheless, the result of hard work in another direction.
MARKHAM.—Believe me, those who creak of the badness of human nature forget that they are decrying the highest work of creative power. They remind us of the boy who curses the chestnut because he does not know how to get the fruit without lacerating his fingers with burr. If it were only remembered that man is a compound being, made up of moral feelings and intellectual faculties, as well as animal impulses, and these powers should receive such training as every human being has a right to from society, and as nature indicates by giving parental love, then the race would present ten thousand times less vice than at present, and reclaim the bad reputation of "poor human nature."
COLOUR OF HAIR.—"Little Claremont," very light brown—"Rose Hamilton," a light, brightened—"Louisa Jane," golden; handwriting very good. (There is no reason why people are called deceitful with red hair; it is an old *household*ism, if we may coin the word.)—"Sophia Clara," a very handsome brown; handwriting not good, too large.
COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:—
GENTLE JOHN OF SURREY is responded to by—"Marian," seventeen, fair, brown hair, light blue eyes, slight figure, good tempered, and sure of a good fortune at the death of a relative.
AUGUSTUS again by—"Lizette," who thinks he will just suit, and would like to receive his *carte de visite*.
R. R. M. by—"Kate," eighteen, fair, light hair, blue eyes, pretty, and a good figure.
S. T. B. by—"Emily," twenty-one, 5 ft. 7 in. in height, fair, and good looking.
CHARLES W. by—"Maud," rather tall, fair, and good looking.
LIONEL by—"Rosemond," twenty-two, 5 ft. 7 in. in height, fair, with large blue eyes, stout in proportion; being both domesticated and a tradesman, would undertake any business for a good kind husband as her reward.
EXCELLENCE by—"Elly Mavournean," fair, Auburn hair, very ladylike, musical, amiable, and though last not least, a capital manager, and knows how to dress well, but with very little expense.
TOM by—"Jenny E. R.," eighteen, neither tall nor good looking, at present in service, also a member of the Temperance Society, no fortune, but a good, sound education, and domesticated; and—"Ducky," twenty-four, rather short, very stout, about 4 ft. in height, good looking, blue eyes, brown hair, light complexion. Respondent must not be too tall, a short, stout man preferred, with dark hair and eyes; would like a working man best. "Ducky" is domesticated.
MILLY by—"A. H. P.," twenty, dark eyes and hair, and pretty good looking.
ROSE by—"Alfred B.," who would be happy to correspond with her.
ANNE and AGNES by—"F. R. H." and "Carlo T." "F. R. H.," who thinks "Agnes" would suit him, is twenty-three, light hair, amiable, and holds a good situation—"Carlo T.," who would like to correspond with "Anne," is twenty-four, dark brown hair, and in very good circumstances; and—"Julia," twenty-four, 5 ft. 7 in., dark hair and whiskers, passably good looking, good tempered, fond of home, and a partner in a respectable business.
ESTHER by—"Thompson," twenty-five, tall, fair, good looking, temperate, in business for himself as a printer, bookseller, and stationer, with good income and prospects, and in addition to the above he has a few hundred pounds invested in the funds—"Alasaurus," thirty-seven, 5 ft. 9 in., light brown hair, well educated, steady, respectable, and his business on his own account—"H. M.," twenty-six, 5 ft. 8 in., whiskers and moustache, good looking, and well to do in business, but with a good wife would do better—"J. Jacobs," twenty-nine, dark, in a good business, and thinks the Jewish maiden might suit him; and—"G. A. Smith," twenty-six, 5 ft. 11 in., fair, blue eyes, good looking, well made, steady, sober, and holds a good situation.

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